THE RAMAYANA

Translated from the Original of Valmiki

BY

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Vol. II

KISHKINDHYA & SUNDARA KANDAM

[THIRD EDITION]

ORIENTAL PUBLISHING CO.
11D, SURENDRALAL PYNE LANE
CALCUTTA—12

Dhirendra Nath Bose
38A, Motijheel Avenue
Calcutta—28

Printed by
Debiprasad Bose
Joynarayan Press
11D, Surendralal Pyne Lane
Calcutta—12

CONTENTS

Kishkindhya Kandam

Sundara Kandam

CHAPTER I

THE LAKE PAMPA

Rama, with Lakshmana, having repaired to Pampa, full of lotuses and fishes, began to lament with an oppressed heart. No sooner had he cast his eyes upon Pampa than he was stirred up with a mixed emotion of sorrow and joy, and being agitated with passion said, "Look, my boy! How crystal lucid is the water of Pampa, like liquid gem of the bluest hue, and how red lotuses have bloomed in it! What lovely woods fringe its banks, and how the trees with their branches appear like the peaks of a hill! These are the haunts of various beasts and birds. Though I have been greatly afflicted with sorrow for the loss of Sita and at the thought of Bharata's sufferings, yet this beautiful Pampa gladdens my sight Look, how the deep green turf strewn with blossoms of diverse hues, loosened from their stalks, appear like a beautiful chequered blanket spread on the grass. Here and there, lovely creepers, adorned with bunches of flowers, are embracing the topmost branches of the trees laden with blossoms. My darling! It is now spring, the season of love. See, how gently the breeze is blowing, the flowers are in their bloom, and the forest is fragrant with their odour. Look, how the flowery woods rain their blossoms like drops of rain from the cloud. The trees being shaken by the breeze are shedding their flowers, and the rocky ledges are covered with them. The wind seems to be sporting with the flowers; see how many of them it has thrown on the ground, how many are still falling, and how

many hung on the trees. The sportive wind by shaking the branches laden with blossoms is driving off the bees which pursue its course with loud hummings. Hark, what a deep music the wild wind makes as it rushes out of the caves, and how the cuckoos with their songs are teaching the trees to a dance. The fresh, bracing air is delightfully cool and fragrant like sandal, and it removes all fatigue and languor. The trees are being united with one another having their branches inter-laced by the motion of the wind, and the bees are humming on them, being intoxicated by the smell of wild honey The peaks with blossoming trees on their crests appear to have put on diadems on their heads Look, how the Cassius is covered with golden blossoms, like one decked in gold and clothed in yellow robes ! O, Saumitri, as I am now without Janaki, this spring pains me more, and ruthless love smites me all the while. Hark, as if the cuckoos are mocking me with their sweet notes. Hear the Datyuha birds warbling at the fountain-side. Their sweet notes afflict me very much. Formerly, Janaki hearing these notes from the cottage called me by her side and expressed her great delight.

"Lo ! The birds of diverse notes are chirping in the forest and are perched on the branches of the trees. Look, how in each flock, the birds with their mates are cooing in joy, like the sweet humming of the bees. The trees have been rendered vocal by the amorous murmurs of the Datyuhas and by the cries of the male cuckoos. The spring, like fire, is scorching me most—

the red Asokas are its embers, the hum of the bees is its (whizzing) sound, and the coppery leaves are its flame ! Lakshmana, since I no more behold my sweet-tongued Sita with fair eyes and lovely hair, then of what use is this life to me ? This vernal season, when the wood blooms and resounds with the cuckoo's notes, was most dear to Sita, and her love will soon burn away my soul. I find the lovely trees with their blossoms around me but not Sita amongst them ! Alas ! This spring has rekindled my grief for Sita. I am being consumed by her thoughts, so vernal breeze cannot fan me cool.

"Lakshmana ! Look how the frantic peacocks, with their hens, are dancing in joy, spreading their tails, glowing like crystal window-lattices They are aggravating my pain of separation. Look, how the pea-hen dances in amorous joy seeing the pea-cock dancing on the cliff, and the pea-cock spreading its beautiful wings is approaching his mate emitting a shrill cry, as if, in jest. Look, how the hen, being smitten by love, follows the pea-cock. There is love even amongst the birds. Surely, no Rakshasa has brought Sita here, or the pea-cocks would not have danced in joy. If large-eyed Janaki were not carried away, she too would have been smitten with such an amorous longing

"Lakshmana ! Look, how the flowers in consummate bloom fall on the ground with bees humming on them, and how the birds welcome one another with warbling notes, exciting all amorous thoughts. If the vernal season comes where my Janaki is now confined, she

will certainly pine like me. Even if the spring does not appear there, still Sita will not survive my absence, or it might be that spring has appeared there while she is being oppressed by the enemy. But what will she do? Certainly, my darling of a slender make, of sweet accents, of golden hue, and having eyes like the petals of a lotus will die in this spring I am sure, she will not survive my separation : in truth, we were deeply attached to one another.

"O Lakshmana! I am ever thinking of Janaki and this sweet cool breeze, scented with the fragrance of vernal flowers, appears like fire to me. The sweet breeze that I loved so much in company of Janaki is causing me great pain in her absence Formerly, this bird which cried from the sky[1], now caws delightfully from the top of the tree ; so it once presaged my separation from Sita, but now it foretells my reunion with her.

"Look, how the birds perched on the flower-trees are delighting all by their sweet minstrels. The blooming Tilaka, being tossed by the wind, appears like a beauty reeling with wine, and the bees are hastily darting at her. This Asoka, incentive to amorous desires, is remonstrating with me with its clusters of blossoms shaken by the breeze.

"Look, there is the mango-tree in blossoms, like a

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1 When the bird, apparently a raven, cried overhead, it was an omen indicating his impending separation and when it was perched on the tree near Rama and is cawing in delight it is a happy augury that Sita will be soon restored to him.

gaily decorated beauty smitten with amorous desires. Look at the Kinnaras roaming about hither and thither. The swans and *chakravakas* are sporting in the crystal stream of Pampa. Deer and elephants have come for drink. Look, how the red lotuses—each like a crimson dawn—have bloomed in it, and the surface of the water is covered with their pollens cast off by the bees. Quite charming is the beauty of Pampa, and the woods that fringe its banks are most romantic. Look, how the lotuses tossed by the wind repeatedly dash against the ripples.

"Lakshmana ! I can no longer live without that lotus-eyed beauty, fond of lotuses. Oh, how cruel is Cupid. There is no possibility of getting her soon, but it is Love that is reviving her dear image in my mind. I could have resisted the pangs of amorous love, had not the Spring oppressed me thus with its blossoms and leaves.

"Things that were dear during my union with Sita have lost all charm in her absence. Neither the lotus-bud, nor the red Palasha blossom delights my eye. Mark the lotus-petal is like my Sita's eye, and the breeze issuing from the trees carrying the lotus scent by touching its filaments, is like the sweet breath of Sita.

"Lakshmana ! Look, how charming the Cassius looks in its blossoms over the hill on Pampa's southern bank. That hill is rich in minerals, and its table-land is illumined with the red Kinsuka flowers, devoid of leaves.[1] Look, there have bloomed Malati, Mallika, Hibiscus,

1 Budtea Frondosa in which brilliant red flowers appear before the leaves.

Karavi, Ketaki, Sindhuvara, Vasanti, Matulinga, Purna, Kunda, Naktamala, Madhuka, Vakulas Canes, Champaka, Naga, red and blue Asokas, Lodhra brown like the manes of a lion, Ankula. Kurunta, Churnaka, Paribhadraka, Mango, Patala, Kovidara, Muchukunda, Arjuna, Ubdalaka, Sirisha, Sinsapa, Dhava, Salmali, Kinsuka, red Kuruvaka, Tulasi, Sandal, Shyandam, Hintal and Tilaka. These beautiful trees are covered with creepers, and their branches being shaken by the breeze, the creepers appear to embrace them repeatedly like beautiful women intoxicated with wine.

"My boy! The wind having tested different sweet things is blowing from hill to hill, from tree to tree in delight. Look, some of the trees are covered with sweet-scented flowers, while some of them are adorned with sweet green buds The thirsty bees, saying, "this is sweet," "this is full-blown," sit on each and every flower and then hastily leave it in search of fresh honey and thus the ground has been covered with blossoms fallen from the trees. The cliffs being covered with blue and yellow flowers appear as if wrapped with a variegated blanket. Look, what a profusion of flowers bloom in the spring, as if the trees are vying with each other in their floral wealth, and their branches are covered with clusters of flowers, and the bees are humming on them. There a swan sports with his mate in the lucid water of Pampa, causing me great pain. How beautiful is this stream. I now find that the reputation of its beauty is in no way exaggerated. If I can now find Sita and live with her on the bank of Pampa I do not crave for

Ayodhya or of the kingdom of heaven. Surely, all desires and appetites would have been gratified if I could dally with Sita on its emerald green I am pining for the separation from Sita, and the vernal wood, with its rich blossoms and leaves, is causing me very great pain.

"O, how exquisitely beautiful is Pampa ! Its glassy stream is covered with lilies, and various aquatic birds sport in the water These gay birds remind me of Sita There the herd of deer reminds me of gazelle-eyed Sita. Her thoughts make me quite restless and sad. I shall only be happy if I find Sita there on the hill, or if that beauty of slim waist breathes this fresh air of Pampa along with me, and then only I shall live. Only the blessed people enjoy the lotus-scented breeze of the Pampa.

"O Saumitri ! I don't know how Janaki is living under another's subjection. What shall I say when king Janaka and others will enquire after her welfare ? I know not where she is, who has followed this unlucky self to the forest purely from a sense of duty Being deprived of kingdom I lost my sense, but she cheered me up by her company. How shall I live now in separation ? Alas ! Janaki's eyes are beautiful like a lotus, and always a sweet, half-suppressed smile hovers on her lips whenever she speaks. Now, my heart sinks, not beholding the lotus-scented countenance of that faultless beauty. Her accents are distinct, clear, sensible and sweet. When shall I hear them again ? That chaste lady, though suffering greatly from this exile in the forest, yet always talked to me sweet things, like a

cheerful friend. Alas ! What shall I say when mother will enquire about Janaki ? Go back and meet Bharata full of fraternal love, I shall not be able to live in absence of Janaki."

Thus finding Rama weeping like a desolate creature, Lakshmana consoled him with cogent words, "O worshipful one ! Just restrain your sorrow, and good will betide you. People, even without any stain of vice, lose their intelligence when overwhelmed with grief. Considering that sorrow is consequent upon separation, forget thy attachment for your dear one. When the wick is moist, it burns with very little oil. O worshipful lord, if Ravana hides himself within the dark hollow of the earth, he won't be saved. Now try to gather information about him. If he hides himself with Sita within the womb of Diti—the mother of the Asuras—I shall surely kill him, if he do not return Sita to you. Shake off that low despondency and bear up patiently. Nobody can retrieve lost wealth without endeavour. Energy is the chief requisite for performing an act, and there is no greater power than energy. Everything in this world is accessible to an energetic man ; and nothing can dishearten him, by resorting to energy, we shall recover Sita. Banish your sorrow and amorous longing. You are wise and noble, why do you forget this ?"

Then, Rama thinking Lakshmana's advice to be sound, restrained his sorrows and in slow gait, but with an anxious heart, walked along the bank of Pampa, covered with trees shaken by the wind. On their way, they surveyed all caves and brooks carefully. Heroic Laksh-

mana followed Rama, ever thinking of the means as to how Rama could be consoled, and he tried to cheer him up all the way by moral and heroic discourses.

At that time, the chief of the monkeys was roaming about in the Rishyamuka mountain and behold these two mighty princes. He was greatly alarmed by their sight and became sad. Then other Vanaras got frightened and they entered a holy and a pleasant asylum for shelter.

CHAPTER II

HANUMAN

Sugriva was panic-stricken at the sight of Rama and Lakshmana, and cast his anxious look all around He could not remain at rest in one place and became extremely sad. He began to think with anxious heart and then addressing his counsellors said, "You see, these two young men have certainly been despatched by Vali. They have put on barks just to create our confidence. You see, how on the pretext of wandering they have penetrated into the deep impenetrable forest."

Then the counsellors seeing those two heroes, carrying bows in their hands, hastily retired to the summit of the hill and sat down encircling Sugriva, their chief Then other Vanaras, by shaking the hill by their movements, ranged from peak to peak and began to break down the flowery trees by their leaps, and thereby scaring away deer, tigers and cats.

Then of the counsellors seated round Sugriva with

the clasped palms, eloquent Hanuman finding Sugriva thus panic-stricken from fear of Vali, said, "O hero! Don't be afraid. This is Rishyamuka mountain. Here there is nothing to fear from Vali. I do not see that cruel Vali of terrible look, in whose fear you have come away running with an anxious heart. That wicked person has not come to this forest, so I cannot understand why you are so very afraid."

"O Monkey-chief! By this, you simply betray your apish nature. Through your light-heartedness you cannot retain calmness of mind You are endowed with intelligence, do everything by means of gesture. A foolish king cannot rule over the people"

Hearing these reasonable words of Hanuman, Sugriva said, "Who is not struck with fear seeing those two heroes with mighty arms and large eyes, like two heavenly youths equipped with bows and arrows? Methinks they have been sent by Vali. You see, a king has many friends and they have come here out of that friendship. So we should not readily place our confidence in them. An enemy sometimes acts in an extremely treacherous manner and by creating confidence he destroys his adversary in an opportune moment. So we must first know their motives. Vali is quite an adept in these things: besides, kings are skilled in deceiving and destroying their enemies. We should, therefore, send spies in disguise to ascertain their whereabouts. Hanuman, you go in an humble guise and ascertain by gestures and speech who they are. If you find them cheerful, then greet them on my

behalf and create their confidence by my repeated praise and if from their looks and words you do not find any dark design in them, then ask why have they come to this forest."

Being thus commanded by Sugriva, Hanuman went to Rama and Lakshmana from the Rishyamuka mountain. By discarding the form of a Vanara, he cunningly assumed the guise of a mendicant, and after approaching them with great humility, he began with a profuse eulogy, "O heroes! Please tell me who you are. You are highly beautiful to look at and are saints devoted to religious practices, nay, you look like gods. Please tell me why you have come here. You are clad in barks like hermits, but the effulgence of your body shines upon the crystal waters of Pampa. Your locks are matted and your eyes are like the lotus petals. You have frightened the denizens of the forest by reconnoitring the woods on the bank of the Pampa. You carry in your hands bows, like that of Indra, which presages death to your enemies. You are staring like lions and breathing heavily from exhaustion. You are quite heroic and beautiful. The hill has been illumined by your beauty! You are worthy of sitting on the throne; tell me then why you are roaming in the forest. One of you resembles the other. It seems that you have descended from the heavenly region, as if the sun and the moon have come down upon the earth! You have broad chests and your shoulders are like that of a lion. You look like two mighty bulls, beaming with the exuberance of health. You are gods in human

form. Your arms are long and round like the trunk of an elephant Ornaments should adorn such arms, but I don't know why you have not put them on. It seems you can protect the earth with its hills, dales, forests and seas. Your bows, being bright and gilded with gold, look like golden thunderbolts. Those beautiful quivers are full of deadly arrows like venomous snakes Those two long swords, wrought in gold, look like two snakes that have cast off their sloughs. But, O heroes! Why do you not talk to me?

"You see, in this Rishyamuka hill there lives a hero named Sugriva He is virtuous and is chief of the Vanaras. He has been roaming throughout the world with a sad heart, being driven off from his kingdom by Vali. I have been sent by him I am the son of Pavana,[1] a Vanara by nationality, and my name is Hanuman Pious Sugriva is willing to make you friends. I am his counsellor, I can go wherever I wish, nothing can obstruct my career It is for Sugriva's benefit that I have come from the Rishyamuka in the guise of a mendicant"

Saying these eloquent words, Hanuman lapsed into silence. Rama was exceedingly delighted at Hanuman's speech, and addressing his brother, Lakshmana, by his side said, "My boy! I was looking for Sugriva—the monkey-chief. His counsellor is now present before me! This Vanara here is an orator, you just speak to him in friendly accents. Nobody can talk like this, as he has just now spoken, unless he is versed in the Rik, Yajur and the Sama Vedas He must have heard the

1 Wind God

whole of the Grammar many a time, for though he has talked much, not a single slang has escaped from his lips and there was no distortion of his face, brows or eyes while he spoke. His words are sweet and simple. How clear, distinct and sweet voice issues from his throat, chest and roof of the palate. He knows what words should be employed first and what last, that enables one to understand the import of each word and to clearly realise the object indicated by them. It is a wonderful speech ; it can please even one's enemy, ready to strike with an upraised sword. I know not how a king whose emissary is like this achieves his ends. In fact, whose messenger is such a qualified and eloquent speaker, his works are accomplished even by words"

Then eloquent Lakshmana said to Hanuman, Sugriva's counsellor, "O learned one! We are aware of the noble qualities of Sugriva, and it is why we are looking for him. We shall act according to his directions as you say."

Hearing this clever speech of Lakshmana, Hanuman thinking of Sugriva's victory, became anxious for contracting friendship between Rama and Sugriva.

CHAPTER III

THE INTRODUCTION

Hanuman, hearing the object of Rama's arrival and seeing his peaceful attitude towards Sugriva, thought ; "Since Rama has come for some business which is in the hand of Sugriva, surely he will get back his kingdom."

He then cheerfully asked Rama, "O hero! Why

have you come with brother Lakshmana to this forest, full of wild and ferocious animals ?

Thereupon, Lakshmana, with the permission of Rama, said, "O hero ! There was a virtuous king by the name of Dasaratha. He protected the four castes according to law. He was envious of none, and nobody ever wished him any evil. That king used to rule over the world like a second Brahma, and performed many sacrifices as Agnistoma, etc. Yon is Rama, his eldest son. He is the most accomplished of all the sons. All auspicious royal signs exist in him. He was installed on the throne, but has been deprived of the kingdom, and therefore, he has come to the forest along with me. As in the evening the solar rays follow the glowing sun, so his wife Sita has followed him. I am his younger brother, Lakshmana, and being captivated by his noble qualities I have undertaken to serve him as a servant. He is worthy of enjoying all happiness, and is adorable of all. He is intent upon the well-being of all, but being deprived of all wealth, he is now passing his days in the forest and hath his wife carried by a Rakshasa. We know nothing about that Rakshasa. Diti's son, named Danu, who was turned into a Rakshasa by a curse has told us this much that Sugriva, chief of the Vanaras, is valiant and wise. He must know who has carried off your wife. Saying this, Danu ascended the heaven with an effulgent body.

"Hanuman ! I have told you everything about Rama. Now, myself and Rama seek shelter of Sugriva. Rama has attained great fame by giving away in charity

profuse wealth, and he who was formerly the lord of all, now seeks shelter of Sugriva. One who is virtuous, and by whose favour the people became happy, now craves for Sugriva's favour! The eldest son of king Dasaratha, who would do honour to all the worthy princes of the world, now seeks for Sugriva's help. When he being smitten with sorrow has asked for Sugriva's shelter, Sugriva, with the leaders of his party, ought to receive him with grace"

After Lakshmana said this with tearful eyes, the eloquent Hanuman replied, "You are intelligent, gentle and have your senses under control Sugriva will certainly receive you. It is due to his good luck that you have come here. He has great enmity with Vali. Vali has taken away his wife and has turned him out of the kingdom. Since then Sugriva is passing his days in great fear in the forest He will now assist you in your search for Sita with his Vanara followers."

Hanuman again said with sweet words, "Come then, let us now go to Sugriva."

Then Lakshmana after greeting Hanuman duly, said to Rama, "Arya! From what has been said by Hanuman, the son of Pavana, it appears that some object of Sugriva will be achieved through your help It has therefore, been good that you have come here This hero has gladly said everything quite frankly, and it does not seem at all likely that he is telling lies."

After this clever Hanuman thought of taking Rama and Lakshmana to Sugriva, and then throwing off his false guise of a mendicant, he assumed the form of a Vanara and left the place by taking Rama and Lakshmana on his back.[1]

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1 Most of the hill tribes carry burdens on their backs. A hillman easily carries one on his back, seated on a chair, secured by a rope bandage with his head.

CHAPTER IV

FRIENDSHIP

Then Hanuman leaving the Rishyamuka range, arrived at the Malaya hill, and addressing Sugriva, the monkey chief, said, "Here is heroic Rama who has come with his brother Lakshmana. He is the son of king Dasaratha of the Ikshwaku line He has come to the forest to redeem the pledge of his father. It is for the satisfaction of a queen of that king, who propitiated fire by Rajasuya and Aswamedha sacrifices, who gave hundreds of kine in charity to the Brahmanas, and who ruled over the earth strictly according to the standard of truth and honesty. that Rama has come to the forest. In the mean time, Ravana has carried off his wife. He now seeks your help. Rama and Lakshmana are anxious to make friendship with you. They are highly adorable, now receive them with due honour"

Then, Sugriva hearing these words of Hanuman assumed a cheerful look and spoke with delight, "Rama, I have heard of your noble qualities from Hanuman. You are pious, devoted to penance and bear great affection towards all. I am a Vanara and you are ready to make me your friend. I feel myself highly honoured and benefited by this. Now, if friendship with me be agreeable to you, here I do stretch forth my hand, just grasp it with a firm vow"

Rama then accepted Sugriva's hand in delight, in token of friendship, and embraced him warmly. At that time, Hanuman produced a fire by rubbing two

pieces of wood and worshipping it with flowers, cheerfully placed it between the two.

Then they went round the blazing fire and fondly gazed at each other, but none of them felt satiated by gazing at the other.

Then, Sugriva cheerfully said, "Rama, you are now a dear and a near friend of mine. Our sorrows and joys must now be common."

Saying this, Sugriva broke down a leafy and a flowery branch of the *Sala tree* and sat upon it along with Rama. Hanuman, too, with great delight, brought a blossoming Sandal branch for Lakshmana's seat.

Sugriva then began to narrate with a cheerful look: "Being deprived of kingdom, I have been roaming in the forest with a panic-striken heart. I have great enmity with Vali. He has taken away my wife. I have taken shelter in this fortress from fear. Please do that by which I can get rid of that fear."

Then the virtuous Rama smilingly replied, "O chief of the monkeys, I know that the outcome of amity is good offices. I shall surely kill Vali, the abductor of your wife. These irresistible sharp shafts of mine, adorned with the feathers of Kanaka, will fall upon him like deadly snakes. You will surely find him slain and shattered like a hill."

Hearing these well-meaning words from Rama, Sugriva joyfully said, "O chief of men! I shall get back both my kingdom and wife through your grace. You will reduce my enemy, Vali, to such a state that he may not injure me any more."

Thus friendship between Sugriva and Rama was contracted. At that time the left eye of Janaki, like the petal of a lotus, the brownish eye of Vali, and the flaming left eyes of the Rakshasas began to throb

CHAPTER V

THE REMEMBRANCERS

Sugriva, again, cheerfully resumed, "Hanuman, the chief of my counsellors and devoted followers, has told me why you have come to the forest with Lakshmana and how Ravana has carried off Janaki when you and Lakshmana had left her alone, and how that seeker of week moments killed Jatayu. The Rakshasa has caused you grief of separation from your wife, that sorrow will soon be over. I shall bring back your Sita, like Devasruti carried off by the Danavas Whether she be in the sky or in the nether region, I will soon restore her to you. Take my words as true, even gods like Indra and the Asuras would not be able to retain Sita, like poisonous food. O hero! Banish your sorrow, I will bring back your darling. Now, I find that she was Janaki who had cried out, Alas, Rama! Alas, Lakshmana! when the Rakshasa was carrying her away, and she writhed like a serpent on Ravana's lap. Seeing five of us on the summit of the hill, she threw down her ornaments and scarf to us. We have deposited them inside the cave. Let me fetch them here, just see whether you can recognise them or not."

Rama then said to Sugriva of sweet speech, "O friend, soon bring them here. Why are you delaying?"

Sugriva, thereupon, entered a deep cave, and after bringing from there the scarf and the ornaments, he said, "Just see."

Rama's eyes then grew misty with tears, as the moon becomes clouded with frost Being wet with tears for Sita, Rama fell on the ground, uttering "Alack, Sita !" He pressed those ornaments again and again on his heart and panted heavily like a pent-up snake. Then addressing Lakshmana by his side, he broke forth in tears. "Look Lakshmana ! At the time of being carried off, Janaki threw down these ornaments and scarf on the ground. Perhaps, she threw them on a grassy turf, or they could not have remained thus unstained as before."

Then Lakshmana said, 'O worshipful one ! I do not know her bracelets or ear-rings ; every day I bowed to her feet, so I know her anklets."

Rama then asked Sugriva, "O Friend, tell me whither that dreadful Rakshasa proceeded carrying off my darling Janaki.

"Where does he live who has caused me such a great calamity ? I shall destory all the Rakshasas for him. He who has kindled my wrath by stealing away Janaki has opened the door of death for him. Who is that person that has abducted my darling from the forest by deceitful means ? Tell me, I will soon send him to destruction."

Then Sugriva said with joined palms, "Rama ! I do not know the secret abode of that sinful Rakshasa but I know some thing about his prowess and vicious pedigree. Banish your sorrow and I shall tell you truly

that I shall do, that by which you will get back your Janaki. I shall soon kill Ravana with his host by my valour that will gladden you. Don't be overwhelmed with grief, bear patiently, Such nervousness does not become a man like you. You see, I am also distressed for separation from my wife, but a humble Vanara as I am, I do not lament like you. Rama, you are noble, intelligent and gentle, you can easily find consolation. Just restrain that flowing stream of tears. Patience is a dignified privilege of the wise, do not forsake that.

He who is calm and intelligent, never loses his self-possession in danger, loss of wealth, even in a situation that threatens his life. He who is not wise and is not clever in any thing is overwhelmed with grief and sinks down like a heavily loaded boat by the current of the river. My friend! I entreat you with joined hands and for the love that bear to you, resort to your valour, give up your sorrow Those who are afflicted with sorrow are unhappy, and they lose their manliness. Sorrow may bring about one's end So do not indulge in grief. It is not advice, but, as a friend I tell you what is good for you Maintain the honour of amity by banishing your sorrow.

Thus being consoled by the sweet words of Sugriva, Rama wiped his face stained with tears, with the end of his cloth. And after recovering himself, Rama embracing Sugriva, said, "You have done what a well-wishing friend should do. I have grown calm at your words. It is always difficult to get such a friend in times of difficulty and distress. Now, you will have to accomplish

two things; to search for Janaki and to kill that Rakshasa You will have to put your utmost endeavours in these two things. Now, tell me frankly what shall I do for you. As seeds in a fertile soil become fruitful during the rains, so all your actions will be crowned with success. What I have just told you with a spice of pride, know it to be true. I have never told any lie, nor will I ever do it in future."

Thereupon, Sugriva, with his followers, became extremely delighted at this promise of Rama. Then; Rama and Sugriva taking their seats in a secluded spot talked about their sorrows and joys. Being assured by Rama, Sugriva banished all his doubts about his success.

CHAPTER VI

FRIENDLY DISCOURSE

Being extremely pleased with Rama's words, Sugriva said, "When I have got such an accomplished person as you as my friend, I do no more doubt that I shall be favoured by the gods, Not to speak of my kingdom, by your help I can secure even the kingdom of heaven. Having contracted friendship in the presence of sacred fire, I have risen in the esteem of my own people. You will also, by degrees, realise that I am a worthy friend of yours, but for this I need not advertise about my own qualities now O independent spirited one ! Affection and regard of a noble person like you always remain constant. True friends say that gold, silver and ornaments are the common properties of all friends A

friend is a friend, whether he be rich or poor, happy or miserable, good or bad For friendly love, it is not difficult to forsake one's wealth, happiness or even his native land."

Then, Rama observed to Lakshmana, endowed with the prowess of Indra, "What you have said is not untrue."

On the following day, finding Rama and Lakshmana sad, Sugriva cast restless look all round, and seeing a blossoming branch of the *Sala* he broke it and sat upon it with Rama.

Hanuman also offered a *Sala* branch to Lakshmana.

Ram took his seat and appeared like a calm sea. Then Sugriva said, "My friend! Vali has driven me away He has stolen my wife; I am roaming about in great distress in the Rishyamuka hill. Vali is my mortal enemy, and I am greatly afraid of him. You are the destroyer of all fears, be favourably disposed towards this helpless creature"

Thereupon, virtuous Rama replied with a gentle smile, "My friend, it is by doing good that one becomes a friend and by doing injury that another turns to be an enemy. Now, Vali has become your enemy for his own misdeed, and I shall myself destroy him. You will find him shattered by my sharp arrows adorned with feathers." This filled the martial chieftain Sugriva with delight, and after thanking Rama profusely said, "Rama! You are the refuge of the afflicted and you are also my friend. Therefore, I have expressed my sorrows to you. You have become my friend by accepting my

hand, in the presence of fire, and I vow to you that you are dearer to me than life. Mental agony has made me weak. You are my friend, so I tell you every thing without any reserve."

Saying this, Sugriva burst into tears. He could not then speak out any thing, and with great fortitude restrained his tears that was about to break into torrents and heaving a deep sigh and wiping off his eyes, he resumed, "My friend! Vali has turned me out of his kingdom by speaking harsh words. That wicked fellow has stolen my wife, and has cast into prison my friends. He is always anxious to take away my life, and for this he had despatched many Vanaras on several occasions, but I put them to death. To speak you the truth, when you came here I was alarmed at your sight, so I dared not come out People may be frightened even by a trifle because of fear. Now, only Hanuman and others like him are my friends These affectionate Vanaras always protect me. They rise and sit at my words. What shall I say more? Please know this much, my friend, that my present miseries will be over by the destruction of Vali of renowned valour; my life and happiness simply depend upon his death. Rama! Being afflicted with sorrow, I have told you even the means of the removal of my sorrows. Whether you be happy or unhappy, you will have to give shelter to me."

Rama asked, 'Sugriva! What is the cause of this hostility with Vali? I am eager to know it. After hearing that I shall judge of the comparative strength of you two and decide your course of action and shall

do that you may be happy. I have been greatly irritated by hearing the tale of disgrace and it is agitating my heart, like a current of water swollen during the rains. Dost thou now confidently and freely speak so long I fix my string to the bow. As soon as my arrow will be discharged, your enemy will be destroyed"

CHAPTER VII

THE TALE OF ENMITY

Sugriva then began to narrate the cause of enmity. "Rama! Powerful Vali is my elder brother. He was highly esteemed by my father and I too greatly honoured him. After father's death, the counsellors conferred the Vanara Kingdom on Vali, for being the eldest son. When he began to rule over the vast ancestral kingdom, I obeyed him like a slave.

"There was a formidable Asura by the name of Mayavi. He was the son of Dundubhi Danava. Formerly, Vali had incurred his hostility concerning a woman. One night, when all had fallen asleep that Asura appeared at the gate of Kishkindhya and challenged Vali to a fight by emitting terrible roars like that of a lion. Vali was then asleep, but he could not bear those roars and rushed out in great haste. When he rushed forth in great wrath for the destruction of the Asura, I bowed to him and tried to dissuade him, his wives too did the same, but he pushed them aside and sallied forth in wrath. Then, I followed him out of brotherly love"

"Seeing us from a distance, Mayavi began to run

away in fear and, we chased him with great speed. At that time, the moon rose in the sky, and the paths were clearly visible in that light. The Asura then entered a spacious and impregnable cave screened by weeds and grass, and we at once stood barring the mouth of the tunnel. Vali seeing Mayavi had entered the hole, said in wrath, 'Sugriva, stand cautiously at the mouth of this cave, let me enter and kill the enemy in fight.' Hearing this I asked his permission to enter, but after making me swear by his feet to stand at the entrance, he entered the tunnel"

"Thus a year passed Standing at the entrance of the hole I thought Vali had been killed On account of my affection for him, I was greatly alarmed and my mind was filled with dark misgivings. After a long time, I found warm blood coming out of that hole. I was startled by that sight. At that time, I heard the noise of the Asuras engaged in a fight; but I heard no voice of Vali. From all those signs, I concluded that Vali was dead and I stopped the mouth of the hole, and after performing the Tarpan rites to his spirit, came back to Kiskindhya with a sorrow-laden heart. My friend! With great care I kept secret all these about Vali, but afterwards the counsellors somehow came to know of these and made me king.

"When I was thus ruling over the kingdom according to law, Vali returned after slaying his enemy, and seeing me installed on the throne, he used very hard expressions towards me, addressing his counsellors to speak the truth. At that time, I could have chastised

him sufficiently, but thinking of the dignity of brotherly relation I restrained myself When Vali entered the palace after the destruction of his enemy, I greeted him with due honour, but he did not bless me with a cheerful countenance. I bowed down placing my crown at his feet, but great rage prevented him from showing me any favour.

"Then, for my welfare, I humbly said, 'O king! By good uck, you have returned safe after destroying your enemy. I am helpless, you are my lord. I am holding your umbrella of many ribs, like the full-moon just risen, and your *Chowri*; please accept my service. For about a year I stood with a distressed heart at the entrance of the tunnel, then I found blood oozing out of the hole through its mouth. I became greatly anxious at this and was overwhelmed with grief. Then, I stopped the mouth of the hole with a stone and returned to Kiskindhya with a sad heart. Then the citizens and the counsellors installed me on the throne even against my will. Forgive me for this. You are the worshipful king, and I shall be your obedient servant as before. Your absence is the cause of my installation. Now, this city with its inhabitants and ministers is safe. Your kingdom was entrusted in my hands as a trust and I protected it as such. O hero! I bow down to you, and implore you with joined palms to forbear thy wrath. A kingdom without a king incites lust of conquest in others, and it is from this apprehension that the citizens and the counsellors, being of one mind, forcibly installed me on the throne.'

"Rama! When I was humbly submitting these things, Vali abused me greatly and after assembling the citizens and his favourite counsellors said in their presence, 'Citizens and my ministers! You know that, one night an Asura, named Mayavi, angrily challenged me to a fight. At this I came out of the palace, and this cruel brother of mine also followed me then. That Mayavi seeing us coming out, fled away in fear and we ran after him He then entered into a dreadful hole Thereupon, addressing this cruel fellow, I said that I could not return to the city before killing the enemy, and asked him to wait at the mouth of the hole till I returned after accomplishing the task. I entered the cave thinking that Sugriva would remain stationed at the entrance. About a year elapsed in search of Mayavi; after that, I got sight of him and sent him with his comrades to the abode of death. The Asura then groaned in agony and his blood filled the cave. When I came out after slaying that Asura, I could not find any way out of the cave. Then I repeatedly called aloud, 'Sugriva, Sugriva,' but no Sugriva answered. I was extremely distressed at this, and then began to kick at the door again and again till at last the stone fell down from its mouth. Then issuing from the hole I came to the city. But you see how Sugriva forgetting all brotherly love tried to secure my kingdom. This cruel fellow shut me in that cave.'" Saying this, shameless Vali turned me out with a single piece of cloth on me. He drove me away after taking my wife. I roamed over the world in his fear, and being extremely afflicted

with the loss of my wife, I have taken shelter in this Rishyamuka hill. For some special reasons Vali cannot come here. My friend! I have now told you every thing about the cause of our enmity. I am innocent and I have to suffer all these for nothing. I am thus being greatly tormented by my fear of Vali. O, destroyer of all fears! Show me thy favour by destroying the cause of my fear."

Then, the heroic Rama replied with a smile, "My friend! All these irresistible shafts of mine will be showered upon the wicked Vali. So long I do not see the wicked abductor of your wife, he lives. From my own experience I can well tell what an ocean of grief thou hast been plunged into. I shall come to your rescue. You will soon get back your kingdom and wife."

CHAPTER VIII

PROWESS OF VALI

Sugriva hearing these cheering words of Rama with a good deal of eulogy said, "My friend! In your anger you can destroy all the world like the sun in the hour of universal dissolution. Your bright shafts can pierce one's heart. I shall now give you an account of the prowess of Vali, please listen to it attentively.

"Wonderful is the might of Vali Within the early hours of dawn he can travel from the eastern ocean to the western one and from the southern to the northern one. That hero ascending a mountain tosses up its peaks and receives them back like ball,[1] and breaks down big trees to prove his strength."

1 The expression is Kanduka, the sport of tossing up balls and catching them as they descended, was prevalent among the girls.

"Formerly, there lived an Asura in the form of a buffalo, called Dundubhi, huge as a peak as the Kailash. He possessed the strength of a thousand elephants. One day that huge giant being proud of a boon challenged the billowy Deep into a fight. Then the god of the sea rising from the waves said, 'O hero! I won't be able to fight with you. There is a mountain adorned with fountains and caves named Himalaya. He is the father-in law of Sankara and the shelter of all saints. He can afford you satisfaction in fight."

"Then Dundubhi finding the Sea-god thus cowed down with fear, hastily arrived at the Himalayas, and by flinging huge blocks of white granite on the ground began to shout in heroic pride. Then Himalaya, of peaceful appearance and sweet looking, like a mass of white clouds, being seated on one of his peaks, said, 'O Virtuous one! I am not efficient in fight. I am the shelter of people devoted to penance, so it does not behove you to inflict any pain on me."

"Dundubhi replied with red hot eyes, "If you are incapable of fighting with me, or if you have lost all zest for a fight in fear, then tell me who will be able to fight with me?" Then the good speaker, Himalaya, said, 'O hero! There lives a powerful Vanara-chief named Vali in the beautiful city of Kiskindhya. He is the son of Indra—the king of the gods. He will fight a duel with you as king of the gods fought with Namuchi. If you wish for a fight, go to him. He is a great warrior, and his valour is quite irresistible."

"These words filled Dundubhi with great rage and

he rushed towards Kiskindhya, like a heavy cloud during the rains, assuming the dreadful form of a buffalo tossing his sharp horns [1] Arriving at the city-gate he began to emit loud roars like the sounds of a drum. He broke down trees and plants, rent the earth with his hoofs and, like a mad elephant, pierced the gate with his horns At that time, Vali was in the inner court of the palace. Being unable to hear the roars he came out with his wives, like the moon surrounded by the stars. Then the Chief of the Vanaras—the inhabitants of forest—briefly asked, 'Why are you emitting those roars obstructing the city-gate? I know what thou art Now, run away with your life.' Thereupon, Dundubhi replied with red eyes, 'Don't say anything before the ladies First fight with me, then I shall realise your might I shall restrain my wrath till the rising of the sun giving you time to enjoy. You are Chief of the Vanaras, satisfy them by your embraces and with gifts of love. Have a last look of beautiful Kiskindhya and install some one like you on the throne after sommoning your counsellors. To-morrow, I shall humble your pride. To kill one who is unguarded, or a weakling, or an intoxicated person like you is to commit the sin of destroying a foetus, hence I restrain myself Go and enjoy yourself freely with your women."

"Vali was enraged at those words, and after dismissing Tara and his other wives, said with a laugh, "If you are not afraid of fighting, don't think me drunk but consider

1. After all it seems nothing but a wild buffalo—described as a demon—but to kill it, it requires Herculean strength.

me drunk with the delight of battle." Saying this, Vali, wearing the golden necklace conferred by your father, took the formidable Asura by the horns and hurled him down on the ground by emitting a heroic roar. Dundubhi began to bleed through the ears. But both were determined to win. Vali, powerful as Indra, began to strike Dundubhi with his fists, kicks, stones and logs of wood Dundubhi too struck in his turn but grew exhausted by degrees.

"Vali then raised him up and threw him on the ground. Dundubhi began to bleed profusely through the nose and the ears, and, at last, he breathed his last.

"Then Vali hurled that dead Asura about a league off. At that time, drops of blood from Dundubhi's mouth fell on the hermitage of Matanga Rishi. At this the great saint grew highly angry and enquired in his mind who was that wicked fool that had contaminated him with stains of blood. While he was thinking thus, he found a huge dead buffalo at a distance. By the power of Yoga he understood it to be the doing of a Vanara and cursed the act saying, 'That Vanara who has committed this act won't be able to enter my hermitage. He will die instantly if he comes here. If he who has stained my hermitage with blood and broken down the trees and plants by throwing this body of the demon comes within a Yojana of this hermitage will instantly die. Let his followers now leave this place and go wherever they like, or I shall curse them in the same manner. I bear fatherly love towards this forest, and the Vanaras destroy its leaves, roots,

blossoms and buds. I pardon them this day, but if I find any one of them to-morrow, he will be turned into stone on account of my curse and will long remain in that state "Hearing these words of the sage Matanga, the Vanaras left the place and went to Vali. Seeing them, Vali enquired after the welfare of the Vanaras of the Matanga forest.

"Then they narrated to Vali all about Matanga's curse. Thereupon, Vali immediately proceeded to the asylum of Matanga and begged to be forgiven, but the wrath of the sage was not to be appeased, since then Vali is living in fear and does not venture to come to the Rishyamuka mountain. Knowing that Vali has no access here, I am living with friends in this forest. Look, there lies the huge skeleton of the proud Dundubhi. Look, at these seven palms adorned with leaves and branches. They can at one time be divested of their leaves by the prowess of Vali I have given you an account of his extraordinary prowess. Now, tell me how will you be able to kill him in a fight?" Thereupon Lakshmana asked with a smile, "Sugriva! What will induce you to believe in the defeat of Vali?"

Sugriva replied, "Formerly, Vali many a time pierced these seven palms, if Rama can pierce one of them with an arrow, if he can throw off the skeleton of this buffalo two hundred bows off, I shall consider Vali as dead."

Sugriva again said, "Vali, heroic and proud of his might, his valour known to all, is quite irresistible. Thinking all this I have taken shelter with Hanuman

and others in this Rishyamuka hill out of fear. Rama ! You are deeply devoted to your friends and having got thee I think I have got shelter in the Himalayas, but to tell you the truth, fear of Vali is uppermost in my mind. I don't know your might in battle. However, I do not belittle you in his comparison, nor do I frighten you, but I have been really frightened. My friend ! Your heroic form and courage bespeaks your valour like fire hidden under ashes."

Then Rama smilingly replied, "Sugriva ! If you have no confidence in our valour, then I shall give you convincing proofs."

Saying this, Rama at ease pushed the skeleton of Dundubhi with the toe to ten Yojanas. Thereupon, Sugriva said to Rama, effulgent like the sun, "Rama ! At that time Vali was drunk and exhausted and the corps of Dundubhi was still fresh, but now the skeleton is dry, devoid of flesh, hence light. However, now pierce a palm tree with your arrow, then I shall be able to judge the prowess of the two."

"Just discharge your arrow by bending the bow, like unto the trunk of an elephant ; it will surely pierce through the palm. Rama ! What is the good of any more discussion, do what you think best for me. Like the sun amongst the energising objects, like the Himalayas amongst the mountains, like the lion amongst quadrupeds, you are the foremost in prowess amongst men. "

Then, Rama to acquire Sugriva's confidence, took up his bow and a dreadful shaft and discharged it aim-

ing at the palms, resounding every quarter with the twang of his bow. As soon as that shaft was discharged it pierced through the seven palms, a rock and the innermost region of the earth and in a minute again came back to the quiver!

Sugriva was simply astonished at this heroic feat of the warrior Rama, supremely skilled in the use of arms. He fell prostrate on the ground and profoundly bowed down to him and then with clasped palms, gratefully said, "Rama! What to speak of Vali, you can destroy in battle with your arrows even the gods with Indra and others at their head. Who can resist him in battle who can pierce through with a single shaft seven palms, a rock and the nether region? I have been more than satisfied Now I entreat you with joined palms to kill for my benefit Vali, my enemy in the form of a brother."

Rama then embracing the good-looking Sugriva, in sweet language, said, "My friend! Let us start direct from the Rishyamuka to Kiskindhya. You go ahead and challenge in a fight Vali, your false brother."

CHAPTER IX

THE CHALLENGE

After this, they all arrived at Kishkindhya and concealed themselves behind the screen of trees by entering a dense forest.

Sugriva then tied his cloth round his waist and summoned Vali with a terrible roar that seemed to rend the sky.

At this, the heroic Vali was greatly enraged and as the sun travels from the eastern mountain whence it emerges to the western hill where it sets, so Vali came out in a hurry. A great duel was fought between the two. as between the Mercury and the Mars in the sky. Being overwhelmed with rage, they began to strike each other with their fists and palms. At that time, Rama stood hid behind a tree, holding a bow in his hand. Rama found one quite indistinguishable from the other, like the twin Aswini Kumara brothers, so he refrained from discharging his deadly shaft.

In the meantime Sugriva was defeated by Vali, and he fled in fear of his life towards the Rishyamuka, finding Rama not coming to his rescue. Vali pursued him in great anger. Being beaten and exhausted, Sugriva entered a deep forest with a bleeding body. Seeing that Vali gave up the chase in fear of curse, saying, "Go, thou art saved."

After that, Rama with Lakshmana and Hanuman arrived at the place where Sugriva was. Seeing Rama, Sugriva, with a downcast look and struck with shame, pathetically said, "Rama! You first gave me proofs of your valour, and asked me to challenge Vali to a fight, then you suffered me to be beaten by my enemy! I can't understand your conduct. You should have told me plainly that you would not leave this place, nor would kill Vali."

Rama then consoling Sugriva said, "My friend! please don't be angry. Hear me why I did not shoot my arrow. Both you and Vali looked quite alike by

your statures and dress. At that time, I could not detect any difference between the two, either in voice, movement, dress, colour, look, or in prowess. I stood dumbfounded in confusion and was alarmed by that resemblance. So I could not discharge my deadly shaft, fearing that I might strike you down and thus end our friendship. People would have condemned me if, as a fool, I would have destroyed you through my ignorance or childishness.

"Moreover, it is a great sin to kill one who has asked for shelter. My friend ! What shall I say more ? Myself, Lakshmana and Sita shall always be at your service, and I live under your shelter. You are our only stay in this forest. Go now, and again fight a duel without any fear. You will immediately perceive Vali rolling on the dust struck by my arrow. Now before you enter into the arena of battle put on some mark so that I may recognise you. Lakshmana ! Pluck that sweet-scented and auspicious, blossoming Naga creeper and put it round Sugriva's neck." Thereupon, Lakshmana brought a blossoming Naga creeper from the foot of the hill and tied it round the neck of Sugriva. Then, with that flowery creeper round his neck, Sugriva looked as beautiful as a cloud tinged with the evening rays of the sun, with flocks of cranes hovering under it ! Being thus encouraged by Rama, Sugriva became desirous of starting for Kishkindhya again.

CHAPTER X

ENCOURAGEMENT

Then, Rama, with Lakshmana, taking sharp and gilded arrows proceeded towards Kishkindhya ruled by the prowess of Vali. First of all, walked Sugriva with the creeper tied round his neck. After him went Lakshmana, heroic Hanuman, Nala and powerful Vanaras. On their journey, they saw many beautiful caves, forests and peaks. They saw lotuses in clear pools, bloomed like the buds of Vaidurya gem and heard the joyous cries of swans, Chakravakas and other aquatic birds.

As they proceeded, they found trees bent down with heavy profusion of flowers, lucid streams running to the sea, tall cliffs, deep caves, flocks of deer running fearlessly in the forest. They saw terrible, wild elephants with white tusks ranging along—the destroyers of river-bank, and raiders of pools. They met monkeys huge as elephants and covered with dust. Seeing all these, the followers of Sugriva advanced on their way.

Coming across a dense forest, Rama asked Sugriva, "Look there a deep forest, dark as a patch of clouds under the sky ! Its skirts are surrounded by plantain groves. Tell me, my friend, what forest is this ? Great is my curiosity to know"

Then, Sugriva, while proceeding, replied, "It is an extensive asylum, it removes all languor, and abounds in palatable fruits and roots Here lived seven Rishis called Sapta Janas. They always lived in water with their heads hanging down, and fed upon air after seven days. These saints after seven hundred years repaired

bodily to the heavenly region. By virtue of their penance, this asylum is inaccessible to the god and the Asuras. Even beasts and birds do not enter here. Those who enter there through ignorance meet with death. Here, the jingling sounds of the ornaments of the nymphs and their sweet notes are constantly heard, and one can always smell sweet odour. Here always burn three kinds of fire, like Garhapatya. Look, there rises its pink flame like the wings of a pigeon, and the tops of the trees lit up by the flame appear like Vaidurya hills. Rama! Bow down to these saints reverentially with Lakshmana. Those who show them honour become free from all fears of disease."

Then, Rama with Lakshmana bowed to the saints with clasped palms, and Sugriva with the Vanaras delightfully proceeded, and they, at last, arrived at impregnable Kishkindhya, protected by Vali.

After arriving at Kishkindhya, they stationed themselves behind a screen of trees and the stout-necked Sugriva, fond of woods, being surrounded by the Vanaras, angrily challenged Vali to a fight, tearing the sky with a terrible yell. It seemed, as if, a cloud, steered by the wind, was thundering at that time.

Then Sugriva, of red hue like the rising sun, with the slow gait of a proud lion, looking at Rama said, "Rama! We have now arrived at Kishkindhya, the city of Vali. It is full of golden instuments and Vanaras and is decorated with flags. You have promised to bring about the destruction of Vali. Now redeem that

pledge, as the present season fills the creepers with fruits, so fructify that promise."

Thereupon, Rama said, "For putting that flowery Naga creeper round your neck, you look beautiful like the moon encircled by the sky. Now, point out to me your enemy in the guise of your brother. I shall remove your fear and enmity with a single shaft. He will roll in the dust as soon as he comes within my sight. If Vali, coming within my view escapes with his life, accuse me then. I have penetrated seven palms in your presence, so consider Vali as slain by me. I never speak any falsehood even at the risk of my life, nor shall I do it in future for any gain. So banish your fear. I tell you, I will redeem my pledge. As Indra fructify the seedlings with rain, so I shall fulfil my promise. Now, set up such a roar so that Vali, adorned with gold necklace, may come out. Vali is proud and fond of fighting. If you challenge him, he will certainly come out of his inner apartments, leaving the company of his wives. A hero can never brook any insult by his enemy. Specially when he know himself to be trully gallant, he won't stand before his wife."

Then Sugriva, of golden yellow hue, set up a terrible roar which seemed to rend the sky. Thereupon, the bovine cattle became frightened and pale, like damsels contaminated by the touch of third persons for the fault of the king.[1] The deer ran away in fright.

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1 i e., for want of proper protection.

CHAPTER XI

TARA'S COUNSEL

The impatient Vali, of golden hue, heard the terrific roar of his brother from the inner apartment. As soon as he heard it, he began to tremble in age. He felt himself humiliated, and grew dim like the sun in the eclipse. His eyes flamed, in anger like glowing cinders. He looked terrible for his teeth, and appeared dreary like a pond whence lotuses have vanished, but where remain only the bare stalks. He came out tearing the earth by his heroic treads.

At that time, Tara embracing him out of love, said with great mortification and fear, "O hero, as people in the morning rising from bed discard their garlands worn at night, so give up your anger which is carrying you away like the impetuous current of a river. To-morrow fight with Sugriva. Though your enemy is not more powerful than you, though you are not in any way insignificant, yet I forbid you not to go out so suddenly. Listen to me why I prevent you now. Formerly when Sugriva challenged you to a fight, you went out and defeated him and he fled away, being wounded by you.

"It has caused great apperehension in me to think that he, who once had run away being defeated and beaten by you, would again venture to challenge you in a fight. The pride and energy with which he has set up his terrible roars, indicate that there is some deep mystery behind it. Perhaps, Sugriva has not come without some succour. Probably, he has taken

somebody's protection, and it is for his prowess that Sugriva has set up such a terrible roar. Sugriva is intelligent and clever, so he will never contract friendship with him whose valour he has not tested.

"O, hero! I shall tell you to-day what I once heard from prince Angada He had heard all these from his emissaries and then has related to me.

"Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, has come to the forest with Lakshmana. They are born of the Ikshwaku family. They are unconquerable and heroic, and have come to the Rishyamuka mountain for Sugriva's well-being. I have heard that mighty Rama will help your brother in battle. He is like the doomsday-fire. Rama is the shelter of the righteous and of the distressed Fame follows his foot-steps. He is wise, prudent and obedient to his father. As the Himalayas are the home of all minerals, so he is the abode of all virtues. He has no equal on earth, so it is not proper for you to incur his hostility.

"O hero! I do not wish to kindle your wrath, but I have something more to submit, please hear me. Do thou immediately declare Sugriva as heir-apparent to the throne. He is your younger brother, it is your duty to maintain him. Whether he remains near or at a distance, he is no doubt your friend and I do not find another friend of yours like him in the world. By banishing your inimical feelings, win him over with gifts and proper honour. Enmity with him is not good for you. Let him stand by your side. Nothing is good to you but brotherly love, my lord! If you

regard me as your well-wisher, then consider what I am saying to be for your benefit. Be pleased and abide by my words Rama is powerful like Indra, do not quarrel with him."

But Vali's end was near, so he did not listen to the well-meaning words of Tara

CHAPTER XII

THE FALL OF VALI

Then Vali reprimanding Tara, of moon-like countenance, said, "Ah, my timid creature ! Why should I put up with his anger since my brother, who is my enemy, is roaring so haughtily ? Brave people, who do not run away from the battle-field and who have never experienced any defeat, prefer death to ignominy. Now Sugriva is challenging me to a fight, how can I brook his boast ?"

"Ah, my darling ! Don't be anxious for me from fear of Rama. He is virtuous and full of gratitude. Why should he be inclined to commit evil ? Go back with your maids. Why do you follow me here ? I have got sufficient proof of your devotion towards me. Don't be afraid on my account, I shall fight with Sugriva. I shall not kill him but shall humble his pride. I shall not override your wishes. He will be dealt with mercifully. He will run away even being struck with fists and sticks. That vicious one will never be able to withstand my prowess and skill in battle. My darling ! You have given me good counsel and evinced great love for me.

For my sake, please go back with your women. I assure you that I shall inflict only defeat on Sugriva."

Then, Tara of sweet speech embraced Vali and began to shed gentle tears. She prayed and recited mantras for the victory of Vali and re-entered the inner apartment with her maids, oppressed with grief. After this, Vali panting heavily like a serpent with anger, hurriedly came out of the palace and cast his look all around to get a sight of Sugriva. He saw golden-yellow Sugriva, standing like a column of fire by tying up his loins with a piece of cloth. Then mighty armed, heroic Vali tied his clothes firmly and rushed forward with clinched fists Sugriva too in anger raised his fists and with red-hot-eyes rushed towards Vali.

Thereupon, Vali said, "Look here ! I have clinched my fist and knitted my knuckles closely, I will kill thee with this blow."

Sugriva too answered in wrath, "I will crush your head by this fist-blow and immediately despatch you to the realm of death."

Thereupon, Vali attacked Sugriva and began to strike him vehemently. Then blood began to flow all over Sugriva's body like rills and fountains trickling down a hill. But Sugriva fearlessly uprooted a Sala tree and hurled it like a thunder on Vali. Vali, being smitten by that blow, became overwhelmed like a loaded boat in the sea. Both were equally strong, skilful and quick to take advantage of another's mistake. They shone like the sun and the moon in the sky, and began to strike each other vigorously with their fists,

arms, legs and nails. Both were wounded and both began to bleed. Both tore the sky with their angry yells. But after a short lapse of time, Vali regained his strength, and Sugriva became exhausted and was worsted in the fight. Sugriva became extremely angry, and indicated by signs and gestures his loss of strength to Rama.

Rama finding Sugriva thus over-powered and repeatedly casting anxious looks all around, took up a dreadful shaft for the destruction of Vali. He then fixed it on the bow-string, like the wheel of destruction. Beasts and birds were frightened by the twang of his bow and fled away in different directions in fear of destruction That flaming shaft, like a flaming thunderbolt, with a terrific din, smote Vali on the breast. The heroic Vali thus being struck by Rama fell prostrate like the flag-staff of Indra raised at the time of the full-moon in the month of Aswina. His voice was choked and he became senseless.

As the great god, Rudra, emits fire with smoke from the third eye of his forehead, so Death-like Rama, foremost of men, discharged that foe-destroying flaming arrow, worked with silver and gold. Being struck by that arrow and being bathed in blood, Vali fell like a blossoming Asoka tree grown on the hill.

CHAPTER XIII

GRAVE ACCUSATION

Then Vali, adorned in gold, measured his full length on the ground like a cut-down tree, and Kishkindhya

grew dark like the moonless sky. Still then the jewelled necklace given by Indra shone round his neck, for which, his radiance, life and strength did not seem to forsake him altogether. For that gold necklace, he looked like an evening cloud, whose fringes had been tinged with crimson light. His beauty appeared to have been divided between the necklace, and his body, with the shaft struck to his heart. Being struck by Rama's arrow, he attained heavenly bliss. At that time, he looked like a flame about to be extinguished, or like king Yayati fallen from heaven, on account of the waning of his religious merit ; or as if Time had brought down the sun on the ground on the day of universal dissolution. Vali was irresistible as Indra, had broad chest, long arms reaching up to the knees, bright countenance and yellow eyes. Rama with Lakshmana gazed at him and with great respect drew near him with gentle steps.

Thereupon, Vali spoke to warlike Rama bold and hard words, but just and appropriate. He said, "Rama, I was engaged in a fight with another man, for what did you then strike me down ? You are born of a noble family, you are heroic, mighty and compassionate, you are firm in your resolutions, you are energetic and are always engaged in the welfare of people, you have proper ideas of time and place, and all people speak highly of you ; moreover, knowing that control of passions, heroism, forgiveness, patience, righteousness, chastisement of the guilty, all these kingly virtues, exist in you, and thinking of your high pedigree, I

came to fight without paying any heed to Tara's warning. So long I did not behold you, I thought that since I was engaged in fight with another person, and consequently off my guard, Rama would not strike me. But now I find you to be wicked, unrighteous while passing under the guise of righteousness. You are like a well, hid in the grass, and fire under ashes. You are a wicked villain though passing for an honest man. I did not know you to be a hypocrite feigning piety, and addicted to vicious deeds. I have not slighted you in any way, nor have I done any wrong to your city or to your province. I am an innocent denizen of the forest—a Vanara—living on fruits and roots. Nor was I engaged in a fight with you, why did you strike me then? You are a famous man and a prince, you are of pleasing appearance, and outwardly look to be virtuous! Tell me now, who being born of a Kshatriya family having education and discretion and possessing all the outward semblance of a virtuous man, can act so dastardly without any hesitation or remorse.[1]

1 This event conclusively proves that Rama was not an out and out creation of Valmiki's imagination. Valmiki would have by all means avoided (had it solely depended on his imagination) such a stain on Rama's lily-white character The event had some historical background behind it, and Valmiki, in spite of his deep love of ideals could not be false to history, nor could he omit inconvenient facts, as some modern writers of history do, because of their pet theories or narrow patriotic zeal. This conclusively proves that Rama is not a myth, nor is the Ramayana an allegorical poem.

This act of Rama may, however, be justified from a poetical point of view. Rama who had recently lost Sita,

"Tell me why you are wandering about in the form of a mendicant. A king should have sense of equity and charity, but you have none. I am a Vanara and you are a man. Why did you smite me then ? Gold, silver, land and such other tempting things are the incentives to compass another's death, but how could you be tempted by our wild fruits and roots ? A king should at any cost and fearlessly enforce laws and discipline and mete out favour and punishment He should not act according to his whims. But, Rama ! You are whimsical, haughty and fickle and too narrow-minded in the discharge of royal duties. You have no respect for righteousness, no regard for what is profitable or good, but you are swayed by your senses and lust. Now tell me how you would defend yourself amongst the virtuous after killing me. Those who encompass the death of the king, Brahmanas and kine, those who commit treachery, those who are thieves, deceitful and atheists, those who kill their friends, those who commit adultery with the wives of their preceptors, those who marry before their elder brothers, all go to hell. I am king of the Vanaras and certainly you have committed a sin by destroying me.

"Rama ! My skin, hairs, bones and meat are not of any use to a man like you. Of the clawed animals (possessing five nails) only a rhino, a porcupine, an

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became deeply affected when he heard Sugriva's tale of sorrow similar to his own, and he readily promised to help the latter and acted on the impulse of the moment, like a Shakespearean hero, with hot blood and a ready hand.

iguana, a hare and tortoise can be eaten by a Brahmin or a Kshatriya. Though I possess five nails, yet my flesh is not approved by the Shastras, so you have killed me for nothing. Alas! Darling Tara told me what was true and beneficial but I slighted her words through ignorance. The earth, in spite of you, seems to be husbandless just as a gentle damsel appears to be when married to a man who has renounced his faith! You are wicked, treacherous and mean. How could a villian like you be born of Dasaratha? You are characterless and have deviated from the path of virtue. It is a pity that I have been destroyed by a man like you. Defend your conduct in a decent society. I had no concern with you, but you have applied your prowess against me, whereas those who have wronged you remain quite untouched! To speak the truth, you would have met death at my hand today, had you openly fought with me It was difficult to attack me, but you have attacked me by concealing yourself from my view, as a serpent bites a person when asleep. Surely, you have committed sin by this act. You have compassed my destruction for Sugriva's well-being, but had you told me about the recovery of Janaki I could have restored her in the course of a day. I could have made over to your hand wicked Ravana, the abductor of your wife, by binding his neck with a chain. As Hayagriva stole white Gandharvi Sruti so I would have brought her at your bidding from the bottom of the sea, or from the nether region. It is proper that Sugriva should ascend the throne after my death, but it is highly improper for

you to strike me thus unjustly. Every living being is doomed to death, hence I am not at all sorry for death but tell me what thou hast gained by my death."

Then noble Vali's tongue became dry. He was smarting under pain for wounds all over the body inflicted by the arrow, and staring at Rama, glowing like the sun, Vali lapsed into silence.

CHAPTER XIV

RAMA'S REPLY

Heroic Vali lay like the sun shorn of its lustre, like a cloud devoid of water, and an extinguished flame, Rama being thus reproached, said in modest and upright word, "Vali! Why do you blame me through childishness, being ignorant of duty, love and of popular customs? Without learning anything from the elders and preceptors you have ventured to take me to task.

"This land, with all its hills and forests, belongs to the Ikshwakus, and they are the chastisers of all human beings, of beasts and birds. Now, truthful and straight-forward Bharata himself has assumed the charge of protecting this land. He is modest, versed in

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Sruti—The revealed knowledge, of course, the sacred Vedas, here compared to Swetaswatari (white Gandharvi). Now, Aswatari may mean either the wife of the great serpent who was supposed to live in the nether region (i. e., a Nagini) or a female Gandharvi.

I have preferred the latter meaning. Hayagriva, (having the neck of a horse) a Daitya prince, stole the Vedas at the end of a cycle of creation (Kalpa). Vishnu assumed the form of a Fish and rescued the Veda by killing the Daitya king. There is an Upanishad named Swetaswatara.—Translator.

polity, and is skilled in chastising the wicked and in protecting the good. He has appropriate notion of time and place and knows the real significance of religion, desire and wealth. Now, he is the ruler of the earth; we and other princes tour over the world at his command for the spread of righteousness. When that virtuous king of kings himself rules over the world who will dare violate the order of religion? You are irreligious, passionate and characterless and you have committed breach of kingly virtues. Father, elder brother, and preceptor should always be treated as one's father, while younger brother, son, and pupil should be regarded as one's son. And this is what is sanctioned by religion. The religion of the saintly people is indeed difficult to understand but the immortal soul that dwells in every body's heart can discern what is good or bad. You are fickle-minded; your other Vanara companions are also fickle, restless and foolish. As a blind man cannot lead another blind man, so how would you be able to discern right and wrong by consulting your companions. Don't abuse me simply from anger. Now listen to me why I have struck you.

"By violating eternal principles of righteousness, you have ravished your younger brother's wife. Noble Sugriva is still alive, his wife, Ruma, is according to the Shastras your daughter-in-law. You have committed great sin by securing her. You are a libertine, and have violated religion. I have, therefore, punished you. There is no other meet punishment, but death for him who acts against humanity and

violates immemorial customs. I am born of a noble Kshatriya line, how can I overlook your crime? Death-sentence is legally awarded to him who being infatuated with lust, becomes attached to his daughter, born of him, sister or brother's wife. Now Bharata rules over the earth. We are under his service. You have deviated from the path of virtue, how can we then overlook it? Bharata is engaged in governing the world according to the rules of righteousness, and that intelligent ruler punishes him who is sinful and vicious. Bharata is always prompt to strike down lustful people We have punished you at his tacit wish.

"I have as great a friendship with Sugriva as with Lakshmana. Sugriva promised me his help for the recovery of my kingdom and wife, and I also promised to help him, in the presence of other Vanaras. How one like myself can break his promise? Know, therefore, thou chief of the Vanaras, that for these reasons, I have punished you. It is my duty to chastise you. If you had any regard for righteousness, you would have willingly submitted to punishment. Those who are virtuous, help their friends. Manu has, in two verses, given directions for the purification of character and the virtuous people believe in the efficacy of them, I have also acted according to them. Manu has said that those who are punished by the king for their offences, the sins are expatiated by that punishment and they go to heaven like the virtuous people.[1] The guilty are, at least, absolved from sin

1 Manu—Book VII Verse 318.

either by atonement or by punishment, but the king who, instead of punishing the offender sets him free, commits a great sin. O chief of the Kapis! Formerly a Bauddha[1] Sannyasi committed sins like you, and my worshipful forefather, Mandhata, chastised him. Other kings too in order to rectify him, dealt out due punishments to him. Besides such punishment by the sovereign, there is penance by which all sins are atoned. Therefore, do not lament any more. I have punished according to the sanctions of morality; we are not free, but governed by religion.

"O hero! I have something further to add, listen to it, but don't be offended. I am not at all sorry for striking you from concealment. People capture (*Mriga*) deer by means of noose or trap, either openly or by lying in ambush. The deer might be frightened, might be unsuspecting, might be off its guard, or cautious, might be at bay or run-away, but men living on flesh commit not the slightest sin by killing it. Even pious princes hunt in the forest. Now you are a *Shakha-mriga*, a monkey. It doesn't matter whether you fought with me or nor. I have struck you since you are a deer.[2] The king is the defender of his people's faith and his duty is to do him good, hence the lives of his tenants are at his command A king is a god who visits the earth in the form of a man, so one ought not to

1 This expression proves that this portion is a later interpolation.—Translator.

2 Mriga means deer. Shakhamriga (an arboneal deer) means monkey. Thus there is a pun upon the word.—Translator.

envy him, abuse him, insult him or utter anything unpleasant towards him ; I have only performed the duties appertaining to my class, but being ignorant of right and wrong, you are unjustly accusing me through your anger."

At this, Vali got true spiritual vision and considered Rama to be absolutely innocent. He then said with folded palms :

"Rama ! Your words are true, and not unreasonable. You are good and I am bad, how shall I reply to your words ? However, you should not take any offence for whatever unpleasant or unjust things I might have uttered against you through ignorance or mistake You have personal experience of righteousness. You are engaged in the welfare of your subjects, your supreme intelligence is your guide for proving one's guile and punishing him accordingly ; and I am the foremost of all sinners. O, virtuous soul ! Please save me now by pious counsels."

By that time tears choked Vali's throat and his voice became faint. Being nearly dead like an elephant stuck in the mud, he broke forth in a distressed voice looking at Rama. "O Rama ! I am not the least sorry for myself, nor do I think anything about my friends and relations, but I feel distressed with thoughts about Angada, there, adorned with gold bracelet. I have brought him up from his boyhood and in my absence he will grow sad, and will pine away like a dried up pond. Angada is my only son, he is a mere boy, his intelligence has not yet ripened. I love him dearly,

please protect him now. May you ever remain gracious to Sugriva and Angada. Please help them in their good actions and prevent them from doing any wrong. As you look upon Bharata and Lakshmana, so kindly look upon these two. The virtuous Tara is guilty towards Sugriva on my account, but let not Sugriva insult her in any way. He who is obedient to you, and with your help, has recovered his kingdom, is capable of ruling over the earth, even heaven is quite accessible to him. Rama ! What shall I say more ? Though Tara forbade me, but courting death at your hand, I was engaged in a duel with Sugriva."

Saying this Vali lapsed into silence.

Then Rama finding Vali free from all doubts and suspicions, consoled him with pious words, "O Vali ! do not blame us, nor consider yourself guilty We are more conversant with the principles of religion than you are, so listen attentively to what I say. He who punishes the punishable and he who receives the punishment will not lose their spiritual bliss, for each one has done his part. Now, you have been absolved, from guilt for this punishment and being thus punished, you have won your religious merit. Now banish all your sorrows, fears and mistakes. Angada will be as affectionately brought up by me as by you, and Sugriva will never slight him in any way."

Then Vali hearing these sweet words of Rama—the repressor of enemies in battle—replied with cogent words :

"O hero ! I am smitten with arrows and about to

lose my consciousness, please forgive me, for what I have said through ignorance. Be propitiated."

Vali who had already received injuries all over the body being struck with stones and trees, lay prostrate by the shaft of Rama and became unconscious through excessive pain.

CHAPTER XV

TARA

In the meantime Tara heard that Vali had been slain by Rama's arrows Hearing that cruel news she became extremely anxious and came out of Kishkindhya taking Angada with her. At that time, the powerful Vanara retinue of Angada were running away in fear at the sight of Rama. Tara met them on the way. As the deer run away in different directions when the lord of their herd is killed, so they were running away, every one being borne down with extreme sorrow and fear, as if Rama's shaft was after each of them.

Thereupon, Tara asked them with a distressed heart, "O Vanaras! Why are you running away frightened and distressed, leaving behind your king, before whom you always used to march? I have heard that cruel Sugriva has taken Rama's help for the kingdom, and Rama has killed Vali by striking him violently with an arrow from a distance. Why are you so afraid? Rama is far off from here."

Then the Vanaras, capable of assuming different forms at will, said in one voice, "O thou with son alive! Do thou go back. Protect your son, Angada, death

himself assuming the form of Rama has carried away Vali. Rama's arrows have pierced through trees and huge stones. Vali has been struck by that thunderbolt-like shaft. On the extinction of that Indra-like mighty ruler, the Vanara hosts are hurriedly fleeing away in great consternation. Let the heroes now defend Kishkindhya and install Angada on the throne All will submit if Vali's son be installed as king. But, O queen, we think you should not live here any more. Hanuman and other Vanaras will soon enter the fortress. Both those who have wives and those who have not, will enter here Formerly, we ill-treated them. They are most covetous and we are very much afraid of this.

Thereupon, Tara gave a fitting reply to their words, "My husband is dead, what shall I do with my son? There is no need for kingdom, nor is there any necessity for self-defence. I shall take my shelter under his feet who has been killed by Rama's arrow."

Saying this, being overwhelmed with grief, Tara ran forward in tears, striking repeatedly her forehead and breast with her palms. Proceeding some distance she saw her husband, the destroyer of enemies and irresistible in battle, who could hurl huge stones and move about freely in the batle-field like the wind, who could emit terrible roars, was lying on the ground, slain by a single hero, as if a lion has been killed by a tiger, rapacious for flesh, as if a cloud was lying idle, by discharging all its content, like unto a sacred pile of stones decroated with flags, and altars revered by people that had been scattered and broken by Garuda,

the king of birds, in quest of snakes. At a little distance, Rama stood reclining his body on a mighty bow, by the side of Lakshmana and Sugriva. Tara passed by them, came near Vali and fainted in grief as soon as she beheld him.

At last, she awoke from her stupor with a cry on her lips, "A worshipful lord." Finding Vali to be dead, she burst into tears.

Then Sugriva beholding Tara weeping and Angada by her side grew extremely sad.

Tara, with a moon-like countenance, seeing her husband, huge as a rock, lying on the ground like a felled down tree slain by the deadly shaft of Rama, burst into bitter lamentations with a sorrow-stricken heart, embracing her dead lord! "O mighty hero! Why dost thou not talk to me? Perhaps, I am guilty of some iniquity? Get up and lie on some better bed. A king like you never sleeps on the ground. Perhaps, you love the earth more than you do love me, since you have embraced it in death leaving me behind. Perhaps being engaged in a just conflict you have built another beautiful city like Kishkindhya in heaven, or how could you renounce your love for this city? You used to sport with us in fragrant woods, now there will be an end to all such things. I have been rendered destitute and desolate by your death. My heart must be very hard, since it has not yet broken seeing you lying on the ground You drove away Sugriva by taking away his wife, and this is the consequence of that act. You neglected, through your perverse judgment, what I

spoke to you for your well-being about this fight. My lord! I think you will entice the minds of the heavenly nymphs, clever in speech and proud of their beauty and youth. It is Time that has destroyed you, though you were under the control of none, but it has dragged you by force before Sugriva. You were engaged in fighting with another person and Rama is not the least sorry for striking you so dastardly! I have never suffered in life, now I shall have to suffer the sorrows of widowhood and live like a helpless woman, a poor object of pity My heroic Angada was till now happy. I have brought him up with great care, but I know not what treatment he will receive from his angry uncle. Angada! Have with all your heart, a last look of your virtuous father. You will not see him any more. My lord, when you went to any foreign land, you used to console Angada by kissing his head, and told me all you had then to say. By your death, Rama has achieved a great thing—he has been absolved from his pledge to Sugriva. Sugriva! Your desire is now fulfilled Your enemy has been destroyed, you will get back your darling Ruma and rule over the kingdom free from all anxiety

"Alas! My lord! I am crying bitterly, why do you not welcome me? I am your darling. Your beautiful wives are here, just cast your look once, upon them"

Then the Vanara-women being stricken with sorrow at Tara's lamentations began to cry surrounding Angada on all sides

Tara broke forth again: "O Lord! Are you leaving Angada behind for good in your eternal journey to an

unknown land ? Angada is beautiful and well-dressed. In accomplishments, he is like you, don't leave him behind. O hero ! If I have offended you in any way through my carelessnes, I entreat you by your feet, please forgive me."

Lamenting thus bitterly Tara with other Vanara women, at a little distance from Vali, resolved to starve themselves to death.

CHAPTER XVI

CONSOLATION

Then Hanuman, the chief of the Vanara hosts, seeing Tara, like a star fallen on the ground from the sky, gently said, "O queen ! All creatures reap the consequences of their acts good or bad You look poor and distressed with sorrow, but tell me for which worthy object of sorrow you are thus mourning ? You are yourself an object of pity, yet for which poor object of pity are you showing this generosity ? I know not who mourns for one having himself this body, like unto a bubble of water ! O lady, with thy son alive now look after prince Angada and decide what to do after Vali's death. Thou knowest that life and death are most uncertain on earth. One should, therefore, do what is best after the death of one's husband or son, and should not mourn for the loss. He is now dead, under whom hundreds of Vanaras received their shelter. This hero used to discharge his kingly duties according to the sanctions of morality, and was endowed with many kingly virtues, such as charity, forgiveness, and equality of treatment.

Now, he has attained the worthy abode of kings, so do not any more mourn for him. These mighy Vanaras and this Vanara kingdom belong to you. Sugriva and Angada have been greatly affected with grief; just direct them to perform the funeral rites of Vali. Let prince Angada rule over the kingdom under your directions.

"That thing is now arrived for which a person prays for the birth of a son, so wait for nothing else

"Tara! Install Angada on the throne, surely you will be happy, seeing him installed on the throne."

Then Tara, overwhelmed with grief for the loss of her husband, sorrowfully replied, "I do not care for hundred sons like Angada It is my duty to follow my dead husband. What authority have I over the Kapi[1] kingdom or in installing Angada on the throne? Sugriva is Angada's uncle; all these things now belong to him. Dont' think that I shall of my own accord confer the kingdom on Angada. It is the father and not the mother who is the guardian in the case of a son. Nothing else is good for me either in this world or in the next, but to take shelter under the feet of Vali and to lie down by the side of the hero"[2]

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1 The expression Kapi, literally, means a monkey, but here neither Kapi nor Vanara literally means a monkey The Vanaras were certainly not apes or monkeys.

The Vanaras, in all probability, appear to be Dravidians who had developed a high order of civilisation, as the ruins of Mahenjo Darro testify The Aryans, however, had not much liking for them' They seem to have been described as Vanaras from derision by the white Hindus probably for the dark complexion and dwarfish figure. They appear to be as much civilised as the Aryans Their conduct, words and sentiments all point out to this.

2 Apparently it refers to the custom of Suttee.

CHAPTER XVII

LAST WORDS OF VALI

At that time, Vali, being at the point of death, was casting looks all around and heaving faint sighs. Seeing Sugriva standing before him, addressing the victorious hero in clear accents said :

"Sugriva ! I was being daily dragged down by my inevitable, perverse understanding, because I became addicted to sin, so you should not take any offence with me. Perhaps it was not in our luck to enjoy the double bliss of fraternal love and the enjoyment of kingdom or why should such a thing happen at all ? However, take charge of governing these denizens of forest, as I shall immediately leave behind this mortal life, kingdom, splendour and spotless fame. O hero, I have something more to add and you will have to do it, though it may be very difficult for you to perform Look at my son, Angada, lying on the ground with tearful eyes. He is a tender boy, he has been brought up in affluence and deserves to be happy He is dearer to me than life. I leave him behind and I ask you to protect him as your son under all circumstances and to give him what he may ask of you. Now you are his protector and you are like a father unto him, giver of everything. If he is frightened at any time, remove his fear as I used to do. This handsome lad is quite heroic like you, and will help you in the destruction of the Rakshasas. He is younger and powerful and will perform feats like myself on the field of battle. Sushena's daughter, Tara, is an adept

in ascertaining subtle meaning of things, and is capable of giving sound advice in times of difficulty and what she may advise know to be the best and follow it without hesitation. Let not her words go in vain. It is also your duty to work fearlessly for Rama, or you will be guilty of sin, and if he is insulted in any way it will surely do you harm. Now, put on this heavenly gold-necklace, with the glory of victory attached to it, as after my death it will lose that halo by coming in contact with my corpse."

When Vali said these out of brotherly love, the fire of enemity was extinguished in Sugriva, his joy of victory was gone, and he became extremely sad like the moon in the eclipse, and after taking the gold chain he began to nurse his elder brother as the occasion required. After this, Vali seeing that his end was near, addressing Angada affectionately, said, "My boy ! Now try to possess proper knowledge of time and place and being indifferent to good and evil, and bearing with fortitude both pleasure and pain you should place yourself entirely at Sugriva's service. I have reared you up till now, it is now your time to do your duty, or Sugriva will never have any regard for you, if you neglect your duties. You should keep yourself aloof from the enemies of Sugriva, and should loyally serve your master by suppressing greed and other selfish desires. Do not be too intimate with Sugriva, nor be wanting in friendship. Too much of everything is bad, henee you should always follow the golden mean."

By this time Vali's eyes became expanded and teeth disclosed, he then gave up his ghost in great pain.

Then the Vanaras, at the death of their chief, burst into tears saying, "Alas! The king of the Kapis has ascended to heaven, and the city of Kishkindhya has grown dark. Hills and dales appear to be lonely, and we too have grown inert! How could that great warrior die at all who removed our fears by killing the wicked Gandharva named Golaha after a strenuous fight for full fifteen years?"

The Vanaras became extremely depressed and restless like so many wild cows in a forest infested with lions, when the bull of their herd is killed.

At that time, Tara gazing upon the countenance of her dead husband, was plunged into an ocean of grief and fell upon the ground by embracing her lord, as a tender creeper for its support twines round a broken tree.

CHAPTER XVIII

TARA'S GRIEF

Then the famous Tara after kissing Vali's mouth, addressing her dead husband, said, "My lord! O how painful! You are lying on hard, uneven ground strewn with gravels, for disregarding my words; or perhaps you love the earth more since you are lying in her embrace and never even care to talk to me! O brave hero! It is really a wonder that Rama could be won over by Sugriva, but henceforth Sugriva will be

reckoned as a hero! Those Bhallukas and Vanaras that used to wait upon you, now mourn thy loss. Angada is crying in grief and I am lamenting bitterly, but how is it that thou hast not still awakened at the sound of our cries? It is the bed of the heroes, which, formerly in battle, thou didst cause thine enemies to lie upon, but, at last, thou art stretched upon it! Thou wert born of a noble family and wert greatly fond of war, but where hast thou gone leaving me thus destiute and lonesome? Let not prudent people henceforward marry their daughters to warriors. Just look at me, I was the wife of a hero, but just now have turned a widow! My dignity and happiness are gone and I have been thrown into an ocean of grief Perhaps, my heart is made of adamant, for it is not as yet rent into hundred pieces beholding my husband dead! My lord! Thou wert my friend, and husband is most dear to a woman, but alas! thou art now dead. The woman who has lost her husband may possess sons or wealth, but still she is called a poor widow by the wise. O hero! Thou art lain in a pool of blood, issued from your own body, as if you are lying on a red sheet dyed with lac. You are besmeared with dust and blood, and I cannot embrace you with my weak arms. Alas! The cause of Sugriva's fear has been removed to-day by a single shaft of Rama Sugriva has, at last, been victorious in mortal enmity. O hero! The arrow has stuck deep into your heart, I am afraid you may feel pain if I touch your body, so I have refrained from it, and am simply gazing upon you from a distance."

Thereupon, Nala extracted the arrow from Vali's body, like the dreadful snake that had entered a mountain cave. The arrow was red with blood and tinged with the rays of the dying sun. As soon as the arrow was drawn out, jets of blood began to flow from the wound like torrents of water from a rock coloured with minerals and red earth. Vali was all over covered with dust due to the duel. Tara brushed them gently with her palms and washed them with her tears. Then addressing the brown-eyed Angada said :

"My boy ! Look, the last stage of the king has arrived. This day has witnessed the end of his sinful enmity. Now, the great hero, resplendent as the newly risen sun, is leaving for the next world ; just pay your last homage to him." Thus being directed, Angada took up his father's feet in his plump round arms uttering his name.

Thereupon, Tara said, "My lord ! Angada is bowing at your feet, but why do you not, as before, bless him saying, 'May you live long.' Alack ! As a cow with her calf stands by the side of her bull slain by a lion, so I am standing before you with my son. You commenced the sacrifice of battle, but how could you at the end bathe in the stream of Rama's shafts without me ?[1] Why do I not see that golden chain that was presented to you by Indra being pleased with your valour in

1 After the performance of a sacrifice or religious rite the performer takes his bath with his wife, otherwise those will be incomplete. Hence a Sanskrit expression for wife is *Sahadharmini* or a help-mate in religion.

battle ? Thou art dead, but royal splendour still lingers in you, as the resplendent rays never forsake the dying sun. You neglected what I said for your well-being, nor could I at that time prevent you from fight, so I am now doomed with Angada, and the royal fortune has at last forsaken me along with you"

CHAPTER XIX

SUGRIVA'S REPENTANCE

Tara wept being deeply distressed with sorrow. At that sight, Sugriva was greatly pained and became extremely sorry for the death of his brother, and went to Rama with his followers. The generous-hearted Rama had royal signs on his person and held a formidable bow and arrows dreadful like snakes. "O king ! Your promise has been fulfilled, I have got the kingdom, Vali has been killed, but the mind of this unfortunate self is extremely vapid. Queen Tara is crying incessantly, the citizens are crying aloud. The king is dead and prince Angada's life is at stake. Then what shall I do now with the kingdom ? Formerly, being insulted I grew impatient and angry and for that I agreed to the death of my brother, but I have become greatly penitent for it. It is now better for me to retire to the Rishyamuka for good. There I shall any how pass my days by adopting the vocation of my race. Even heaven does not now appear covetable to me for the death of my brother. That intelligent hero told me, 'Go away, I won't destroy you.' To speak the truth, these words were worthy of him, but my act and my words only become me. Can a man even whose greed for enjoy-

ment is great, taking into consideration the pleasures of kingdom and the pain inflicted by death wish for the death of his accomplished brother ? Vali had not the least desire to kill me, fearing that his influence might in any way be curtailed, but what a hateful thing I have committed through my wicked perversity. When I was running away being struck with the branch of a tree, and giving vent to my rage against you, Vali consoling me said, 'Go, never do it again' In fact Vali all along maintained his brotherly love, honesty and piety, but I have betrayed lust, anger and my apish nature. My friend ! As India, the king of the celestials became guilty of iniquity by slaying Viswarupa, so I have committed unthinkable, unoxpiable, undesirable, and most reprehensible sin by killing my brother. The earth, water, trees and women took share of Indra's sin but who will participate in the sin of a Kapi ? Who will bear this burden ? Having perpetrated such an unrighteous act as the destruction of my line, I do not deserve any respect from my subjects. Not to speak of sitting on the throne, I do not deserve even to be nominated as heir-apparent to the throne. I have committed a hateful sin, condemned by all people and it will deprive me of all bliss in the next world. As a volume of water always tends downwards, so the mighty stream of grief has borne me down The sin of fratricide like an elephant with its tusks of penitence, is striking me like unto the bank of a muddy stream. Alack ! As fire drives alloy from gold so sin has driven away all virtue from me. It is for me that these powerful

"O hero! You are highly virtuous, there is no limit to your good qualities, you have controlled your senses and your fame is everlasting and wide, you are forgiving like the earth, you have a strong physique and your eyes are crimson, you have surpassed the beauty of a mortal being and have got the celestial beauty of a heavenly angel. You have bow and arrows in your hand, now put an end to my life with that shaft with which you have slain Vali, for being dead I shall be close to him, and he will never talk to any other woman but myself. O lotus-eyed hero! In the heavenly region the nymphs in their glittering apparels will approach Vali, adorning their hair with red blossoms and wearing shining coronets on their heads. But as he is greatly distressed by my absence, he would not feel happy at their sight, or in their company. O hero! As you have been distressed with sorrow for Janaki in this romantic Hilly Valley, Vali too in heaven will likewise by sorry and grow pale for me. Thou knowest how a handsome man becomes afflicted on account of the separation of his wife.

"I, therefore, entreat you to kill me also. Vali will never be able to bear my absence. O noble-minded one! Never think that by killing me, you will incur the sin of slaying a woman, but if you destroy me, considering me to be the soul of Vali, you will not be guilty of any iniquity for killing a woman. You see, the husband and the wife are quite inseparable and this is proved by the authority of the Vedas and by their equal rights in the sacrifice. On this earth there is not a

Vanaras and Angada are almost half-dead with sorrow. A good and obedient son may easily be had, but a son, like Angada, is never to be found. Alas! Is there any such place where one can get his brother?

"O friend! The heroic Angada won't survive this day. If he does survive, Tara may live, or she will die in grief for her son. I, therefore, wish to enter into fire in order to place me on the same level with my brother and his son. These Vanaras under your directions will search for Sita. They will carry out your work even after my death. Do thou please approve my proposal, as it is really disgusting and painful for for me to live, guilty of destroying my own line."

Hearing these words of Sugriva, overwhelmed with grief, Rama, the protector of the world, became distressed in mind and his eyes grew dim with tears and in great anxiety he repeatedly looked to the tearful Tara, weighed down with sorrow.

At that time, gazelle-eyed, brave Tara lay embracing Vali on the ground. Thereupon, the chief Counsellors of the Vanaras raised her up, and as they were conducting her to a different place, Tara saw Rama standing at a little distance holding bow and arrow in his hand, resplendent with his own effulgence like the glowing sun. Seeing him (hitherto never seen before) marked with all the signs of royalty, she recognised him to be Rama. Being quite disregardful of her person on account of deep sorrow, in faltering gait she approached the high-souled and pure Rama mighty as Indra and being overwhelmed with sorrow and distress said:

Time is all-powerful in this world. It is Time that creates, it is Time that accomplishes everything, and it is Time that leads all creatures to action. In fact none can do anything overriding the elements of Time. Man is governed by his fate, the fruit of his actions in his previous birth and Time works in concert with fate. Time is eternal it is partial to none, it is no productive cause or power in itself, friendship or kinship cannot obstruct it, it is quite beyond any body's control, but wise people perceive the consequences of their works done in time. Religion, Wealth and Desire are subject to it. Vali by virtue of his royal accomplishments, such as forgiveness and charity, enjoyed wealth and happiness on earth. Now by leaving the world he has got his real self (or true state). He had conquered heaven by his virtues, now by resigning his body on the field of battle, he has really occupied it. What has happened to that high-souled Vali's luck is the proper award of Time So don't grieve for it. It is proper to perform those duties which appertain to the present occasion or time."

Then Lakshmana gently said to Sugriva, benumbed with sorrow, "Sugriva ! Now perform the cremation ceremony of Vali with Tara and Angada. Procure sufficient dry fuel and sandal wood. Angada has been distressed by the death of his father ; just console him. This city belongs to you, so do not be dead and inert with grief. Angada ! Now procure garland, cloth, clarified butter, oil and other scented articles. O Tara ! Bring a conveyance soon, utmost haste is necessary

better gift to the wise man than a wife, and, for religious merit, you just give me my dear one, and by virtue of this gift you will not be guilty of any impiety. O hero! I am helpless and overwhelmed with sorrow, and I am now being dragged away from my husband, so do not be indifferent about my death. I shall not retain my life in absence of the gifted Vali, whose gait was (majestic) like that of a great tusker, and who used to wear a gold necklace worthy of a chief."

At this Rama tried to console Tara with reasonable words: "O the darling of a hero! Do not entertain such a dark design. God has created all beings and He has bound them with pleasure and pain. All created beings are under His law and none cane override Divine dispensation. By the grace of God you will be happy and your son Angada will be declared as heir-apparent to the throne. You are the spouse of a hero, so you should not lament like this."

Tara, who was shedding ceaseless tears, thus being consoled by mighty Rama, controlled her grief.

CHAPTER XX

CONSOLATION BY RAMA

Then Rama being grieved with great sorrow said to Sugriva and Angada in consoling words, "You see sorrow and lamentations do no good to the dead—try to do what is now necessary to perform. It is not proper to violate popular practice which you have observed so long. Don't waste any further time. Delay may interrupt the performance of due rites. You see

now. Let only the capable and strong Vanaras carry Vali, and let the hearse-carriers get themselves dressed.

Saying this Lakshmana went near Rama and stood by him. Under these directions of Lakshmana, Tara in reverential mood entered a cave and brought out a conveyance. The conveyance was worthy of being carried by heroes. It looked like a large beautifully constructed chariot. It had a precious seat inside worthy of a king and had various designs of birds, trees and of warriors wrought around it. It was built with great skill. Its joints were strong and it was decorated with excellent ornamental works. It had latticed windows. It was decorated profusely with floral wreaths, garlands of lotuses and various precious clothes. It was sprinkled with red sandal paste, and over it was spread a saffron-coloured canopy like the halo of a rising sun. Seeing that conveyance Rama said to Lakshmana, "My boy! Soon take the body of Vali to the cremation-ground and perform his funeral rites." Thereupon, Sugriva with tears along with Angada, placed Vali on the hearse and decked his body with garlands and ornaments, and addressing the carriers, Sugriva said, "Go now to the bank of the river and perform his funeral rites. Let the Vanaras proceed in front of the hearse by distributing precious jewels and let them cremate the body of their lord with all the pomp and grandeur worthy of a wealthy monarch."

Thereupon, the carriers proceeded with the hearse and other Vanaras, as if rendered shelterless, followed the hearse in tears. At this, the Vanara women living

under Vali cried in distress, "Alas, O hero, O, alas." Tara and other queens followed the coffin weeping, and for their cries the forest and the hill seemed to bewail for Vali.

When they all arrived at the bank of a river, the Vanaras prepared a funeral pyre on its sacred bank washed by the waters of the stream. The carriers then lowered the hearse from their shoulders and stood aside with grief-stricken hearts.

Then Tara seeing her husband's body placed upon the hearse, took up his head upon her lap and broke forth with a distressed heart, "Ah chief of the Kapis! O hero! Ah, my husband! Please cast your look once upon me. You used to love me very dearly, now I have been greatly distressed by your death, just look at me once. You are dead, but it seems your countenance is still lit up with smiles, and you still look ruddy like the rising sun, as you looked while alive. Now, Death himself in the garb of Rama has snatched you from our midst, and we all have been rendered husbandless by the stroke of a single shaft! Alas! Those Vanara women with their moon-like faces were very dear unto you. They are not accustomed to walk fast and they have come a great distance on foot, and don't you perceive this? Look at Sugriva. See Tara and other counsellors and the grief-afflicted citizens stand round you. Now despatch them first and after they are dismissed from view we shall dally in amorous sports in the forest."

Tara was thus bewailing in grief at the sight of

which other Vanara women were smitten with sorrow and conducted her to another place.

There Angada with tearful eyes with the help of Sugriva placed the body of his father on the funeral pyre and after setting fire to it with due rites he circumambulated round the funeral pyre of his father, bound for the eternal journey.

After this, the Vanaras after cremating the body of Vali duly went to the stream for *Tarpana* (for performing watery rites to the spirit of Vali) and placing Angada ahead of them, Sugriva with Tara performed the *Tarpana*.

Thus mighty Rama being stricken with sorrow like Sugriva, had all the obsequial ceremonies of Vali performed by the Vanaras.

CHAPTER XXI

SUGRIVA'S CORONATION

Sugriva was overwhelmed with grief and as he was putting on a piece of wet cloth, the Chief Counsellors surrounded him and approached Rama. Then as the saints with joined palms approach Brahma, Hanuman with a glowing, red face like the rising sun and who looked like a golden peak addressing Rama humbly said, "Rama ! It is through your favour that Sugriva has got back his vast ancestral kingdom. This kingdom could not be conquered by the Vanaras of beautiful teeth, but it has been subjected to their control through your favour. Now permit Sugriva to carry on the royal duties along with his friends in the city. He has taken

his bath and he will worship you with perfumes, garlands and jewels. Please enter that beautiful cave and delight the Vanaras by conferring the kingdom on his hands and making him lord."

Thereupon, the noble Rama spoke unto Hanuman, "I shall not enter any city or village so long as I observe the mandate of my father. Let Sugriva enter the rich city and there you install him duly on the throne."

Saying this to Hanuman, Rama turned to Sugriva and said, "My friend! Nominate mighty Angada as heir-apparent to the throne. This heroic and gentle prince is worthy of being your heir-apparent.

"He is the eldest son of Vail and he is like his father in heroism and prowess, so he will surely be able to bear the heavy burden of a kingdom. The rainy season has now set in and ever-drizzling Sravana is the first of the four rainy months and military expedition is forbidden in this month. So you now repair to Kishkindhya and let us put up in the hills. This tableland[1] is spacious and beautiful and there is no scarcity of watar of fresh air, and there is profusion of lotuses here."

"We shall live here, do you now go home, rule over your kingdom and enhance the delight of your friends, and when the month of the Karttika (the Autumn) comes, make arrangements for the destruction of Ravana. Let this programme remain settled between us."

Thereupon having thus obtained premisson of Rama Sugriva went to Kishkindhya (so long) protected by Vali.

1 The word in the original means a cave. It denotes a cosy place of habitation.

The Vanaras also entered the city by surrounding Sugriva. The subjects bowed down lowering their heads at the sight of the Vanara king. He responded to their greetings, raised them up and entered the palace.

Then friends of Sugriva busied themselves with the coronation ceremony of Sugriva. Golden umbrella, golden staff, white chowris, sixteen virgins, various jewels, different seeds, medicinal herbs, condensed milk, sprouts of plants, white clothes, sandal, sweet-scented garlands, both aquatic and land flowers, fried paddy, *Priyadgu* creeper, honey, clarified butter, curd, tiger-skin, fine pair of sandals, Kumkuma, red powder, Gorochana (a bright yellow fragrant thing prepared from cow's wine), unguents dyed with various flies and Arsenic, golden ores were brought. Then the friends and relations of Sugriva commenced the coronation ceremony of Sugriva by entertaining the Brahmanas with profusion of eatables and by the distribution of apparels. Those who were conversant with the Mantras, began to perform sacrifice by placing fire on the sacred Kusha grass.

Then Gaya, Gyvaksha, Gavaya, Dharabha, Gandhamadana, Vainda, Dvividha, Hanuman and Jamvuman made Sugriva seated on a golden seat, facing the east upon the roof of the palace, decorated with wreaths and draped with excellent coverings. The water of the rivers of the places of pilgrimage, of the seven seas, and sweet-scented crystal water was collected in golden jars. The Vanaras with that water and with corns invested the crown on Sugriva as the celestials did on

Indra according to the rules laid down by the sages. The Vanaras became mightily pleased at this.

After this, Sugriva declared Angada as heir-apparent to the throne according to the directions of Rama. Thereupon every one spoke highly of Sugriva and praised Rama and Lakshmana repeatedly. At that time, every one at Kishkindhya, felt happy and the whole city was decorated with flags.

Thus when the coronation ceremony was over, Sugriva sent information to the magnanimous Rama that he had got back the kingdom along with his wife, Ruma.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PRASRAVANA HILL

In the meantime, Rama with Lakshmana retired to the Prasravana hill dense with trees, creepers and shrubs and resounded with the deep roars of lions and tigers There bears, monkeys, wild cats and *gopuchhas* were to be found straying about hither and thither. Rama selected a spacious cave for habitation and addressing Lakshmana said, "My boy! It is a spacious and beautiful cave, and there is plenty of breeze. We shall pass the rainy season here. Look! How excellent is its peak! Various kinds of minerals, and white, red and black stones abound in it. There is plenty of river-frogs, and various flower trees and creepers, such as Malati, Kunda, Sindhuvara, Sirisha, Kadamva, Arjuna, Sarjana adorn the place. O gentle one! This cave is worthy of our habitation having

its north-eastean part low and the western part high. At the entrance of the cave, there is a spacious smooth stone, black as collyrium paste. Near about the cave lies a pond full of full-blown lotuses and there the sweet notes of birds and cries of wild peacocks are continually heard. There is a beautiful peak on the north of the cave ; it is of lustrous hue like collyrium, and appears as if a deep blue cloud had risen in the sky ! Behold ! There is another peak on the south It is silvery white and shining with various metals, as if it is extending its head like the Kailasa mountain. In front of the cave, a stream like the Mandakini in the Chitrakuta hill is flowing towards the west. It is free from weeds and along both its banks stand Sandals, Tilakas, Salas, Atimuktas, Saralas, Padmakas, Vaniras, Stimidas, Vakulas, Ketakas, Hintalas, Sirishas, Kadamvas, Vetasas, Kritamalakas and other trees and plants. This river is beautiful like a well-dressed damsel. Chakrabakas, swans and cranes always sport in its water and on account of precious gems found in it everywhere, it appears as if the stream is smiling. Here, it is covered with blue lotuses, there have bloomed the red ones, there the stream is white with lilies and lotuses. It is visited by aquatic birds and by hermits for bath."

"My boy ! Behold the beautiful Sandal trees, and the Kukubha trees rising high as if in jest. It is a very beautiful place and we shall happily live here. At a short distance, is situated the woody Kishkindhya. Listen to the music rising from there and the voices of the

Vanaras in accompaniment of Mridanga.[1] Sugriva has got back his kingdom and wife. He is now master of immense wealth and is passing his days in enjoyment with his friends"

Thus Rama concluded, and decided to pass his days in the Prasravana hill. The hill was indeed a pretty one and there were various pleasant objects near about, but Rama could not in any way feel happy. He pined in grief for Janaki—who was ever present in his memory. Rama witnessed the moon rising in the sky. He stretched himself on the bed, but could not sleep. His grief seemed to be rekindled into fierce flames and he began to shed ceaseless tears.

Seeing that, Lakshmana, deeply smitten with sorrow, entreatingly said, "O hero! Don't be overwhelmed with grief. It is not unkown to you that too much grief destroys everything. You are decent, energetic and have regard for everyday duties. Now if you lose your energy on account of grief, you would not be able to destroy that shrewd Rakshasas in battle. So banish your sorrows, retain your energy and you will be able to destroy the Rakshasas with his whole brood. Not to speak of him, you will be able to destroy even the whole world (if you please). It is now rainy season, wait for the autumn, and when autumn comes you will destroy Ravana with his family and the chiefs under him. O worshipful one! I am only trying to rouse your talent valour, as at the time of sacrifice people

1 A musical instrument to keep time like the tambour.

rekindle the sacrificial fire covered with ashes by offering oblations to it"

At this, Rama praised Lakshmana greatly for his reasonable words and said, "My boy! You have said what a well-wisher and a devoted hero should speak. Do not cast off this grief standing in the way of action. It is no doubt necessary to display one's full prowess when occasion for putting forth one's valour arises. I agree to your words and shall wait for autumn and for Sugriva's pleasure. Heroes never forget the favour they have received from others, but if they be ungrateful good people are pained by it."

Thereupon, beautiful Lakshmana greatly eulogised Rama for his cogent words evincing his good sense and said, "O Arya! Your object will soon be gained with the help of Sugriva and your enemies will be destroyed. Somehow pass the rains in expectation of the autumn. So now forbear your wrath and live with patience these months of rain in this hill frequented by lions.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RAINS

Rama dwelling on the summit of the Malyavan hills, addressing Lakshmana, said' "My boy! The rains have set in. The sky is overcast with clouds like the ranges of mountains. The sky after drinking the humour of the ocean through the sun's rays was enceinte for nine months and is now delivering its showers. Ascending the sky with the flights of clouds one may adorn the sun with Kutaja and Arjuna flowers. See how delightful

twilight is reflected from the cool evening clouds with amber fringes ; it seems as if the wound of the sky has been dressed with a piece of torn cloth (clouds crimsoned with blood-like evening rays). The whole firmament appears to be pining in love, pale—sprinkled with the evening rays like sandal, and heaving sighs in the form of soft breezes The earth was scorched with heat and now being wet with showers is emitting vapour like hot perspiration of Sita, racked with grief. The delicious, gentle breeze perfumed with Ketaki blossom and cold for blowing through the camphor boughs can literally be drunk, from the cup made by the hollows of the palms by knitting them together. The hill is covered with Arjuna and Ketaki flowers and being bathed with rains appears like the anointed Sugriva bathed in showers. This hill having clouds for black deer-skin, stream of water for sacred thread and the sound of the wind blowing at the mouth of the cave appears like a Brahmana engaged in studies! Being struck by lightning as if by golden lashes, the sky neighs like a horse. The lightning in the deep blue clouds appears like Janaki on the lap of Ravana ! The moon and the stars are not visible, they have disappeared in clouds.

"Look ! The Kutaja blossoms have bloomed over the peak and are covered with the vapour rising from the ground ; the earth appears to have been gladdened at the advent of rains. I am now overwhelmed with grief for Janaki and the sight of these flowers makes me extremely sad. There is no more dust, the air is exceedingly

cool, the heat and evils of summer have subsided. Kings have entirely abstained from their expeditions and people living in foreign lands are returning home, and the Chakravakas eager for the Manasa lake are flying thither with their mates. The roads are muddy, hence hardly a conveyance plies through them ; some parts of the sky are bright while other parts are dark with clouds ; so it looks like a tranquil sheet of water locked in rocks. The mountain streams are most impetuous now, their waters have turned red being tinged with various mineral dyes ; and *Sarala* and *Kadamva* flowers are floating on their waters, and the peacocks are crying (in wild glee) on their banks. Ripe and juicy blackberries, dark as bees, and ripe mangoes are falling on the ground by force of the wind.

"Look ! The cloud, huge as a hill, is adorned with lightnings as flags and cranes as wreathers, and emitting roars like an elephant on the field of battle.

"How beautiful the forest appears in the evening, the ground is covered with green turfs and wet with dews *and the peacocks dance over it ! The clouds being* heavy with rains, are journeying with a deep rumbling sound by resting repeatedly on the high cliffs.[1] The cranes are flying in delight under the clouds and they

1 This piece beginning from here till the end of this chapter, in all probability, is an interpolation by a subsequent writer, and its description bears some analogy with that of famous *Meghaduta*. Kalidas thus asks the cloud : "I am speaking of the path alone which thou wilt have to go resting thy feet on mountains whenever thou wilt feel tired."

appear like a garland of lotuses shaken by the breeze hanging under the sky. The earth being covered with grass and variegated with new-born insects look like a damsel clothed in parrot-like green cloth with pink stripes of lac-dye. Sleep is approaching God Narayana, the ocean, the river, the delighted cranes, the cloud, and all look beautiful to the eye Kadamvas have bloomed in the woods, the peacocks hold their dances, and the bull betrays his profound attachment for the heifer, and the fields have grown exceedingly beautiful with corns.

"Wild infuriated elephants are emitting terrific roars. By the side of the rill, elephants delighted with the fragrance of Ketaki and maddened with the sound of the water-falls are gambling with the peacocks. Lovers pining for their sweethearts are sad and the Vanaras are very happy. The black bees lying flat on the blossoming branches of the Kadamva are belching for having drunk too much floral juice in festive joy, and the bees sticking to boughs of the ripe black-berries, as glowing embers, seem eager even to devour the branches. The cloud with lightning appears like a charging elephant. Look, an elephant was about to enter the woods but hearing the deep rumbling of the cloud, he took it to be his rival and at once turned round for a fight. The forest now presents a variegated view, resonant with the humming of the bees and cries of the peacocks. Here the spot is full of water and is surrounded by the blossoming Kadamvas, Sarjas, Arjunas and

Kandalas and there are songs and dancings of the peacocks and it appears like a drinking place.

"The wings of the birds have grown pale with rains and when they are thirsty they drink in delight drops of water hanging like pearls on the leaves Hark, as if a musical concert is being played in the woods,—the humming of the bees is its lyre, the croaking of the frogs is its gutteral sound, rumblings of the cloud are the sounds of Mridanga. Sometimes dancing, sometimes emitting shrill cries, sometimes perching on the tops of the trees, the beautiful peacocks have commenced the music of the forest. Aroused from their long sleep by the rumbling noise of the clouds, frogs are uttering various cries being smitten with rains. The river is proudly flowing towards the sea—its lord—carying the Chakravakas on its stream, and its banks are falling in the water. Deep blue clouds heavy with water rest upon clouds of similar nature. The bees after embracing the lotus with its filaments washed with rains are flocking to the Kadamvas adorned with pollens. The elephants are infuriated, the bulls are happy, the hills are lovely, the princes are now idle. At this time Indra sports with the clouds. Clouds heavy with rain hang low in the sky and thunder like the deep roarings of the sea floods the earth with rivers, lakes, tanks, and pools. Rains fall heavily, the wind blows hard, and the rivers pull down their banks. The mountain like a king is exhibiting his beauty and wealth, being bathed with water from the cloud-jars sent by Indra and brought by the wind. The earth has been gratified with recent

showers, and the sky has become dark with clouds. The streams running in the hills appear like strings of pearls, and stones tumbling down on account of the current of the stream appears like a torn necklace ! Streams of water everywhere, as if the pearl-necklace of a heavenly nymph has been broken asunder in times of amorous dalliance. The birds have taken shelter in the trees, the lotuses are closed and the Malati has blossomed, so it appears the sun is about to set. Kings have now refrained from military expeditions, and troops have halted in their march as if being obstructed simultaneously by rains, enmity and (bad) paths. Those Brahmanas who chant the Sama hymns were waiting for the month of *Bhadra* ; now their time for the study of the Vedas has arrived. At this time, Bharata, the king of Koshala, having repaired to his house and having stored all provisions is now observing religious rites in *Ashadha*. The Sarazu is now brimful with rains and surging with currents, as if Ayodhya herself is making a noise in delight Great is the beauty of the Rains. Sugriva is now enjoying himself, his ambition for victory has been fulfilled, he has got back his wife and regained a vast kingdom. But, my boy ! I have lost my kingdom and Janaki. I am overwhelmed with grief. The rains will not soon be over, Ravana is a formidable foe, so there is no probability of destroying my enemy Sugriva is no doubt faithful to me, but on account of the rains, the time is unfit for journey and way-faring is most difficult. I cannot even mention anything about the search of Sita. Besides, Sugriva after great pains and

sufferings has regained his wife, and my mission is an arduous one ; so I do not wish to speak anything now. After enjoying sufficient rest Sugriva will himself search for Sita in due time. He is grateful and will never forget my help. Lakshmana ! This is why I shall bide my time, awaiting Sugriva's pleasure and the autumn. The heroic nature never forgets the debt of gratitude."

At this Lakshmana, of winning looks, greatly praised Rama's speech, and showing proofs of his intelligence said, "O Arya ! Your object of desire will soon be attained by the help of Sugriva. So anyhow pass the rains in expectation of the autumn "

CHAPTER XXIV

HANUMAN'S ADVICE

Here Sugriva after the destruction of Vali got his kingdom. His object of desire has been attained, and he passed his days in joy with his darling Ruma, with much-coveted Tara and other women, as Indra lives in the midst of the heavenly nymphs. He was himself far removed from all anxieties, his kingdom was entrusted to the hands of his ministers, he was quite indifferent about the supervision of their works and had no suspicion about them, rather had the fullest confidence in them. At that time, he was not anxious for acquisition of wealth or religious merit, but being addicted to pleasure he preferred undisturbed seclusion always.

After some time, Hanuman, the son of Marut, versed in the sacred lore and polity and having sense

of proper time for each work, finding the sky clear, free from clouds and lightning and lit up with the rays of moon, and finding the Sarasas missing the welcome drops of rain, approached Sugriva and addressing him with sweet, and well-meaning words which were calculated to teach the ways of acquiring piety, forgiveness, equity and other virtues, said :

"O king ! Thou hast acquired kingdom, lasting reputation and vast wealth. You should now try to acquire friends. His wealth, influence and fame increase who renders friendly help in time. He indeed acquires a vast territory with the help of wealth, friends and power of chastisement, who has free and clear intelligence. O chief of the Kapis, you are virtuous and gentle. It is your duty to fulfil your promise to your friend. Many a trouble occurs to him who does not do the work of his friend, renouncing all other things Delay defeats the end of an action, and no great result follows even if something significant is accomplished. We are delaying in rendering our services to our friend, so you should now be up and doing in searching for Janaki. O destroyer of enemies ! The time for performing your friend's work will soon be over. The wise Rama fully knows the value of time and is quite conversant with the seasonableness of a thing. Still he has not told you anything even finding that the season is over though utmost alacrity should be observed. He is as yet patiently waiting for you. He is the cause of your prosperity, he is a friend in your adversity, there is no limit to his goodness and really wonderful is his nature. He has

done much for you in the past, you should now help him in return, and should send the chief Vanaras in search for Janaki. Delay before he openly speaks about it won't be so much culpable as after the actual expression of his wish O king! You perform even his work who has not rendered you any help, now what shall I say about him who has destroyed your enemy and restored you to the throne? You are a hero and you ought not to wait for Rama's orders just for his satisfaction. Rama, by dint of arms, can subdue even the gods and the Demons, but he is simply waiting for your promise. He has helped you a good deal by destroying Vali even at the risk of public opprobrium? We should, therefore, search heaven and earth for Janaki. Wonderful is the prowess of Rama Not to speak of the Rakshasas, even the gods fear his might. Do what is agreeable to him with all your heart There are many irresistible Vanaras under your command, and none will be able to thwart their course in heaven and on earth. Now, just direct us what we are to do."

The intelligent Sugriva agreed to this reasonable proposal of Hanuman and asked the energetic Neela to mobilise the Vanara troops from different quarters. "Do thou now see that my army with their captains arrive here without delay. Let the Vanaras from distant places march here soon, and when they arrive, you yourself count their numbers. Whoever will fail to reach here within fifteen days will be punished with death. Go now with Angada to fetch the Vanaras."

Thus giving directions to Neela, the heroic Sugriva retired to the inner apartments of the palace.

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE AUTUMN

Here Rama was racked with grief at the advent of the autumn. Rama observed the pink-yellow sky, the bright lunar disc, and the sweet autumnal night white with the rays of the moon. He then thought about the amorous sports of Sugriva and about the quest of Sita and concluded that the time for marshalling the army was over. He was greatly smitten with sorrow and being almost stupefied with grief thought of Sita dwelling in his heart. Being seated on a peak shining with minerals, Rama broke forth in bitter lamentations at the sight of the beauties of the autumn with a distressed mind .

"Alas ! Who with her sweet Sarasa-like voice used to warble with the Sarasas (cranes) in the hermitage, who was delighted by the sight of the golden blossomed Asana trees and who was roused from her sleep by the sweet cacklings of ducks and swans, I know not how that sweet damsel is faring now in my absence ! How will she, with lotus-like eyes, survive hearing the notes of the Chakravakas living in pairs ? In her absence, I am not feeling happy even at the sight of the hills, rivers and forests. She is most tender, so must have been greatly distressed by the grief of separation, and her sorrows will be greatly increased by the advent of the autumn.

"As the Chataka bird becomes anxious for drops of water from the cloud, so Rama grew anxious for Sita. By that time the graceful Lakshmana returned after

gathering fruits in the hill, and found Rama plunged in intense grief. He was greatly pained at the sight and addressing him said, "O worshipful one! What will you gain by yielding to the pangs of love?. Why do you allow your manliness thus to be overcome? Now concentrate your mind upon action; grief is undermining your power of concentration which alone can put an end to all sorrows. Be cheerful and energetic and resort to your manliness, the only means of accomplishing your task. O hero! Janaki is your wife and nobody can possess her, for who can escape from being scorched by touching the burning flame?"

Rama hearing these words of Lakshmana which could not be easily dismissed, replied, "My boy! Your words are reasonable, well-meaning and are consonant with morality, and it is proper that I should accede to them. It is necessary to acquire a vision of reality by the concentration of mind and to be engaged in work, and it is proper not to enquire about the consequence of an uncommon action."[1]

Janaki's thoughts were ever uppermost in Rama's heart, and his countenance withered and grew thin. Addressing Lakshmana he said, "My boy! Indra has drenched the earth with rains, and has produced crops.

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1 Here is a piece of theology. Rama says that he will now try to acquire a knowledge of reality by meditation and by the concentration of mental faculties. Henceforth he will devote himself to action than waste his time in idle speculations about the far-reaching consequence of an act. The Geeta preaches the same doctrine.

Formerly, the clouds with their dark blue lotus-like hue enveloped all quarters, now they appear clear like an elephant devoid of temporal sweat. The wind has ceased to blow fast, carrying the fragrance of Kutaja and Arjuna flowers Neighings of elephants, cries of peacocks, and the sounds of fountains have ceased. The hill with its cliffs washed with rains, free from impurities and being flooded with moonlight appear exceedingly beautiful. Today the autumn has appeared by dividing its beauty between the boughs of the Saptaparna trees, the brilliance of the sun, moon and stars and the gambols of the elephants. The lotuses have bloomed under the rays of the sun. Look, for the presence of the autumn the bees have resorted to the Saptaparna flowers and the humming noise of the bees are carried by the wind. Bulls and elephants have become proudly restive.

"Look ! The Chakravakas have come from the Manasa lake, their bodies are covered with the pollens of lotuses, and spreading their large and beautiful wings they are resting on the banks of the rivers. The streams now are crystal clear. The peacocks finding the sky free from the clouds have discarded their tails, and appear quite anxious. They are even indifferent to their dear mates and have no hankering for enjoyment. Look, the topmost branches of the golden Asana trees are bent down with blossoms and sweet fragrance has filled the air. Just see how beautiful the forest appears with these trees ! The elephants being infuriated and intoxicated with lust, are roaming

about with she-elephants in the woods, inhaling the odour of the Saptaparna flowers. The sky is bright as a sword, the current of the rivers has abated, and the cool autumnal breeze is laden with the sweet odour of the water-lilies. All quarters of the globe are now free from darkness. Mud has been dried by the rays of the sun, and dust has risen after a long time. It is now time for the belligerent kings to launch into action. The bulls look healthy at the advent of autumn, and they are sporting by rolling in the dust and bellowing in the midst of heifers in delightful expectation of a fight. Great attachment is shown by the she-elephants for their mates. The peacocks in sorrow flock to the river bank, but come back being reproached by the cranes. Infuriated elephants, emitting temporal sweat, are drinking in the lake by trampling down the lotuses, by putting the Karandavas and the Chakravakas into fright. Ducks and swans are sporting in the river which is now strewn with sands and free from mud. The breeze blows now gently, the fountains are dry, and the frogs are silent. Snakes of deadly venom, so long starved in their holes, are now out in quest of food. Look, how the evening, crimsoned by the dying rays of the sun, gently wanes in the sky, and one by one the stars are being revealed by the rays of the moon. The night appears like a woman in white, having for her countenance the beautiful moon and the stars for her eyes, and the soft moon-light for her cloth! The cranes having fed upon the ripe grains in delight are flying in rows

and appear like so many garlands shaken by the wind! Look, how beautiful the lake appears; there the lilies have bloomed and a swan sleeps amongst them! The lake looks like the clear blue sky adorned with the moon and the stars, and the pool looks like an elegantly dressed courtesan adorned with ornaments, having the restless ducks for its (tinkling) zone, and the blooming lotuses for a garland! The sound set up by the wind in the rocky cave, mingled with the music of a flute and the bellowings of a bull have swelled in volume. The Kasha flowers have bloomed on the river-bank and being waved by the breeze appear like a piece of white cloth shaken by the wind! The bees, mad for having drunk honey are yellow with the pollens of the lotuses, and are proudly following the course of the wind with their mates. The water is crystal-clear, and lilies have bloomed in it. The paddy is ripe, the breeze is gentle, the moon is bright, and the notes of the Kraunchas are continually heard; from these it appears that the rainy season is over. The river having fishes for its girdle, is flowing gently, like a damsel fatigued by enjoyment at night moves slowly in the morning. The waving Kasha flowers look like a white silken cloth and being strewn with the Chakravakas and moss, appear like the sweet countenance of a young bride decorated with ornamental pigments and delightful figures of leaves.[1] Cupid himself

1. Cf. Kumarsambhava and Meghaduta,—Patralekha is a kind of toilet, in which figures of delicate leaves were sometimes drawn on cheeks with sandal paste or orpiment. This practice may still be found in certain

seems to have appeared in the forest with his formidable bow to chastise the separated lovers ! Clouds have gratified all by pouring their contents and have disappeared by filling the rivers, lakes and pools. The river in the autumn is gradually showing its bank, as a bashful virgin being shy of the first union very slowly uncovers her thighs. This is the time for military expedition but I do not see Sugriva, or any preparation for it. Four months of rains appeared long as hundred years ; now the autumn has arrived and Asanas, Kovidaras, Saptaparnas, Bandhujivas and Tamalas have bloomed on the hill. Swans and cranes are sporting on the banks, but I am pining for Sita. Alas ! Where is she now, who had entered the inaccessible Dandaka forest as into a pleasure-garden and who followed me like a devoted Chakravaka bird ? Lakshmaṅa ! I have lost my kingdom, fortune and Sita, still Sugriva is not doing me any favour. Perhaps, he is indifferent about me thinking that I am a foreigner, helpless, poor and distressed, and being insulted by Ravana, I have asked for his protection. He promised to help me in search for Janaki, but being himself crowned with success has forgotten his promise. Go now to Kishkindhya and tell that fool infatuated with vulgar pleasures,

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parts of India where young boys and girls decorate their faces with ornamental impressions with white sandal paste after a dip in the Ganges. A similar custom was prevalent in England in Elizabethan times, when ladies sometimes used to adorn their faces with ornamental patches by sticking small bits of paper on them.

—Translator.

that he is a villain who breaks his promise made to his benefactor who in his turn solicits for a favour. Once a word, good or bad, escapes one's lips, he should stick to it, and that is the nature of a hero. Dogs and foxes tear off the flesh of that ungrateful wretch, after death, who is indifferent to his friend having himself gained his object. Ask him if he wants to witness my gold-plated bow like lightning. Does he want to hear the twang of my bow like the angry booming of a thunder ?

"Lakshmana ! It is really strange that Sugriva will be indifferent knowing that a hero like you is my helper whose valour he has sufficiently witnessed. I have contracted friendship with him for search of Janaki but he never thinks of redeeming his promise to me. Four months have elapsed, but Sugriva seems to have no knowledge of it, being addicted to pleasure. He has given himself up to drink and revelry with his friends and courtiers ; therefore, he does not feel any pity for us, racked with pain. Do thou repair to Kishkindhya, inform Sugriva of my wrath and tell him that the road trodden by Vali, after death, is not too narrow to allow him passage. Ask him to keep his promise and not to follow the path of his brother. I have slain Vali in battle and if he now shrinks from keeping his promise I shall destroy him with all his family and relations. My boy ! Do what you think best in the matter. I have become really impatient for this delay."

CHAPTER XXVI

LAKSHMANA'S WRATH

At this Lakshmana replied in wrath, "O Arya! Certainly, Sugriva's sense is not commendable. If he does not behave properly and does not acknowledge that his fortune is due to his friendship, then he won't be able to enjoy royal wealth for a long time. Finding you not in any way offended, but favourably disposed, he has changed his mind and does not think of returning your benefits. So let him die and meet Vali after death. A kingdom should not be placed in the hands of such a worthless man. O worshipful one! I can not control my anger. I shall destroy that liar to-day. Let Vali's son, Angada, with the Vanaras search for Sita."

Saying this, the highly enraged Lakshmana stood up taking the bow and arrows in his hand.

Seeing that Rama gently said, "A man like you never commits such a sinful act. He who can subdue his anger according to the dictates of his conscience, ought not to think of destroying his friend; cultivate good feeling for his former services, give up your anger. Gently tell Sugriva only this, "Friend! The time for the quest of Janaki is about to be over."

The obedient Lakshmana at once bowed down to Rama's words, but in anger he took up a Death-like formidable bow, as that of Indra. At that time, he looked like the high-peaked Mahendra hill; wrath and despair began to scorch his heart like a burning flame. Wise as Vrihaspati, Lakshmana decided in his mind what he would say and what might Sugriva reply.

Burning with the smouldering fire of rage he proceeded with a sad mind in quick paces towards Kishkindhya. By the intensity of his speed he tore down rocks and trees and brushing aside every obstacle with proud steps, Lakshmana proceeded like a mighty elephant. The hill seemed to tremble under his heroic tread.

After sometime, the best of the Ikshwakus beheld the inaccessible city of Kishkindhya, surrounded by the Vanaras and encircled by the hills. Lakshmana with his lips pressed in suppressed anger saw formidable Vanaras strolling outside the city-gate. Seeing Lakshmana they pulled up huge trees and rocks. Thereupon, Lakshmana was doubly inflamed with rage, as fire is fed with fuel, and his lips quivered in anger.

Then the Vanaras seeing Lakshmana thus enraged and terrible as Death were stricken with fear, and ran away in various directions. Thereupon, the chief of the Vanaras entered Sugriva's palace and sent information about Lakshmana's arrival and his anger. But at that time the Damorous king of the Vanaras was enjoying himself with Tara ; so he did not pay any heed to their words. After that, those Vanaras huge as clouds, came out of the city being directed by the ministers. Some of them were grim-visaged and had claws and teeth like those of a tiger, and some were strong as elephants. The heroic Lakshmana was greatly incensed at their sight. Then the Vanaras openly stationed themselves at the crossing of the ditch round the city wall. Then Lakshmana thinking of Sugriva's blunder and of his brother's interest pressed forward. His eyes became

red and he began to breathe hard. At that time, he looked like a fivehooded serpent having the sharp end of the arrow as his tongue, the bow for his expanded hood, and his valour for venom. Angada being greatly alarmed at this, approached Lakshmana with a distressed mind. Lakshmana with angry look said, "My boy! Go and quickly inform Sugriva of my arrival. Tell him that Lakshmana, being greatly distressed by his brother's sorrows, is standing at the gate, and if you please you may pay heed to his words now. Communicating this to Sugriva quickly come back to me."

Angada became restless at these hard expressions of Lakshmana. His face grew dark and he went to Sugriva, and bowing down to Tara and Ruma communicated everything to Sugriva. Sugriva was deeply buried in sleep under the influence of liquor and in amorous langour, so he could not catch even a syllable of what Angada had said.

The Vanaras welcomed Lakshmana with a gentle voice, and to rouse Sugriva from sleep they set up a terrible roar like the roarings of a thunder. Sugriva was then roused from sleep. His eyes were red with wine and he became restless at that noise.

At that time, two intelligent counsellors of Sugriva named Yaksha and Prabhava, of handsome looks, came with Angada hearing everything from the latter's lips. They sat before Sugriva and after greeting him, with sweet and cogent words said, "O king! Rama and Lakshmana, born of men, are kingly and firm in their

promises. They have conferred the kingdom on you. Lakshmana has come to submit something according to Rama's directions, and at his instance Angada came to you before. With his red angry eyes Lakshmana is scorching the Vanaras at the gate. So hasten to him so that his anger may be appeased. Do what the virtuous Rama has asked you to do and try to redeem your promise."

Hearing of Lakshmana's wrath, Sugriva immediately left his seat, and ascertaining the gravity of the present occasion, addressing his counsellors, Sugriva said, "You see, I have not said any improper thing to Lakshmana, nor have I behaved improperly with him. I do not know why he is angry. Perhaps some enemy of mine anxious to find out dark spots in me has poisoned his ears with a false report about me. Now someone amongst you according to his own intelligence try to ascertain the true cause of his anger. I am not afraid of Rama or of Lakshmana, but I do really fear the loss of friendship and then regret that a friend has been angry without any cause. It is easy to contract friendship, but it is very difficult to maintain it owing to the fickleness of mind. A very slight cause may bring about a rupture. I am grateful to Rama for his help and I have not as yet succeeded in doing anything in return, and for this have great misgivings in my mind."

Then Hanuman replied with reasonable words, "O king! It is no wonder that you have forgotten the favour you have received. For your interest the great Vali, mighty as the king of the gods, was destroyed by

the heroic Raghava, and I doubt not that he has been offended and so he has despatched Lakshmana for this. Look, the autumn has come.

"The Saptaparna has blossomed, the stars look bright. The lakes and rivers have become transparently clear, but you have not noticed all these on account of your hilarious enjoyment, and it seems you do not understand that this is the time for making military preparations. The heroic Lakshmana has come just to make you aware of your indifference. Rama is now extremely distressed with sorrow for being separated from his wife. So you must be prepared to hear a few hard expressions from Lakshmana's lips. You are guilty, so try to appease Lakshmana with joined palms ; there is no other alternative. It is the duty of the ministers to give proper advice to the king ; hence I have given out the unalloyed truth without any hesitation. Rama in his anger can subdue the gods and the demons, but you have received his favour ; so it is your duty to please him in every possible way and not to provoke him in any manner. Do then now bow at his feet with your son and relations and be obedient to him, as a wife to her husband. O king, never try to set Rama and Lakshmana at naught even in your thoughts. You yourself have got sufficient proofs that their prowess is really wonderful."

CHAPTER XXVII

KISHKINDHYA

In the meantime, Lakshmana hearing everything from Angada, entered the city of Kishkindhya. Mighty Vanaras were stationed at the city-gate, and they stood up with joined palms at the sight of Lakshmana. Lakshmana was extremely angry and was breathing heavily. The Vanaras were greatly alarmed at that, and they dared not come near him.

Arriving at the gate, Lakshmana found the interior of the city highly picturesque, adorned with gems and rich with high palatial buildings and gardens, laden with fruits and flowers Good-looking Vanaras, like the offspring of gods and Gandharvas capable of assuming different shapes at will, were strolling about, dressed in beautiful apparels and putting on beautiful garlands. The air was laden with the sweet fragrance of Sandal, Aguru and lotuses, and its high-ways were watered with sweet-scented water. Clear streams ran like silver threads. On his way, Lakshmana saw the excellent abodes of Angada, Mainda, Dvividha, Gavaya, Gavaksha, Sharabha, Bidyunmali, Sampati, Suryaksha, Hanuman, Viravahu, Suvahu, nobleminded Nala, Gumada, Sushena, Jamvuvan, Dadhivaktra, Neela, Sumitra and of other prominent Vanaras. Those houses were grey like clouds, adorned with garlands full of fragrance, stored with grains and inhabited by beautiful damsels. Lakshmana gradually passed by them and beheld Sugriva's palace. It was like the abode of Indra, the king of gods. Its beautiful walls were crystal rock,

and the top of the house was white as the summit of the Kailasa mountain. The Vanaras in arms were guarding its inaccessible gate provided with a golden arch. Various fruits and flower trees surrounded the palace and the ever-green Kalpa-tree of deep blue hue like that of a cloud, presented by Indra and always bearing fruit and flowers, spread its delightful shade.

Lakshmana then entered the palace as the sun enters a band of clouds. Lakshmana crossed seven rooms furnished with various seats, and various conveyances standing outside of them. He saw the well-guarded, spacious inner court of the palace where at various places stood golden and silver sets with excellent coverlets. Sweet music, correct in tune and measure, was being played in accompaniment of stringed instruments , young damsels of noble birth, brilliantly attired, were busy in threading beautiful garlands. Sentries and servants stood at different places ; they had nice fineries about their dress, nor were they very busy with their work. Gradually Lakshmana entered the inner apartment.

In the meantime, the jingling sounds of anklets and zones were heard. At this, Lakshmana blushed in shame, and in great rage resounded the place with the twang of his bow. As it is not proper to enter a place inhabited by ladies, so Lakshmana stood there, but was deeply irritated at the neglect of Rama's work.

Sugriva stood up at the twanging sound of the bow and thought, "It is clear that,Lakshmana, devoted to his brother, has arrived as reported by Angada," At this

thought, Sugriva's face grew dark and long, and he asked beautiful Tara, "My darling! Lakshmana by nature is gentle, but he has come fired with anger. What may be the cause of his wrath? Do you find any neglect of duty on my part? That hero never grows angry without any cause."

"Now tell me if you have noticed any dereliction of duty or misbehaviour towards him? Go and yourself see Lakshmana. Try to pacify him, his anger will vanish at your sight. Noble men are never rude to women. I shall see him after that lotus-eyed hero becomes pacified by your words." Thereupon the lovely Tara within-toxicated look, faltering gait and jingling zone, proceeded towards Lakshmana, stooping a little from the exuberance of her breast. Lakshmana felt nervous at her sight and casting aside his expression of wrath in the presence of a lady, he stood with a downcast look.

Tara was shameless under the influence of liquor and finding Lakshmana rather in a pleasing mood, she boldly began, showing her concern for Lakshmana:

"O prince! Why are you angry? Who has disobeyed your commands? Who has unwittingly entered into a forest-fire with dry fuels?"

Thereupon, Lakshmana showing a greater degree of amiability replied, "Tara! Your husband is under the sway of lust and has no religious insight. He has been indulging in sensual pleasures with his low followers, while we are sad with sorrow. He never thinks of us for the pride of his riches and kingdom. He promised to collect troops after the expiry of the rainy

season. Now time for that has arrived, but being addicted to pleasures under the influence of wine, he is quite ignorant of that. Drinking is not always proper. Under its influence people lose their piety and wealth, they forget their debts of gratitude, and quarrel breaks out even with the best of friends. He is the best friend who is gifted with righteousness and wealth, and your husband has renounced such a friend endowed with these two qualities. However, go and inform Sugriva of our present intentions."

Hearing those well-meaning words, Tara said about Rama's business, "O prince ! This is not the time for showing your wrath, nor is it proper to be angry with one's friends and relations. You should forgive him who has resolved to help you in your undertaking It is not becoming of the noble to be angry with the low ; moreover, a virtuous soul like you should not yield to anger. I know why Rama is angry with us and the cause of delay. I am also aware of what is to be done at this moment. I am not even ignorant of the strength of carnal desires for which Sugriva is ever living in the company of women, neglecting all his duties But I find you blind with rage, hence you cannot now feel the influence of love. Men swayed by lust lose their sense of righteousness, and of time and place, they never discriminate between right and wrong, O hero ! The chief of the Kapis, under the influence of lust, lives always close to me and he has lost all sense of shame. But he is a brother to you, please forgive him. Even saintly persons through ignorance fall victims to their

passions, whereas Sugriva is a fickle Vanara. Hence it is not to be wondered at all that he will be deeply engrossed in sensual pleasures."

Tara, after a pause, again began with bold, loving words, and with an intoxicated look, "O hero ! though the Vanara chief is under the influence of lust, yet he has issued orders beforehand for the collection of troops. Powerful Vanaras from different hills will come for your help. Come with me. Your character is pure, so it would not be sinful to see another's wife as a friend."

Thereupon, Lakshmana entered the inner compartment of the palace and found the bright-apparelled Sugriva seated on a golden seat, holding Ruma in deep embrace. He was adorned with jewels and ornaments and looked resplendent as Indra, the king of the gods, and was surrounded by beautiful damsels decked with excellent ornaments and garlands. At that sight the eyes of Lakshmana became red with anger.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LAKSHMANA PACIFIED

Lakshmana being extremely sorry for his brother's sufferings, burnt with rage like a kindling flame and breathed heavily. Sugriva was pained by that sight and stood up from his seat, like the decorated tall flagstaff of Indra. Ruma and other beautiful women also stood up as the stars rise after the moon. Sugriva's eyes were red with wine and he stood before Lakshmana like a Kalpa-tree with joined palms.

Lakshmana finding Sugriva in the company of women along with Ruma broke forth in anger, "O chief of the Kapis, that king who is noble, self-possessed, truthful and generous is adorable, but he who is addicted to vice, makes false promises to his friends, is cruel and villainous. You see, if one speaks falsehood for a single horse, then he becomes guilty of slaughter of hundred horses, and one who speaks falsehood for a single cow becomes guilty of the iniquity of slaughtering a thousand cows, and he who shrinks from fulfilling his promise commits the sin of suicide, and he becomes a hindrance to the salvation of his ancestors. That wicked fellow who after gaining his object neglects to perform his friend's work is ungrateful and is fit to be destroyed. Sugriva! just listen what Lord Svayambhu has said about ingratitude. He has said that 'even those who slaughter cows, drink wine and break their vows may be saved, but there is no salvation for an ungrateful fellow.' O Vanara, you are neglecting Rama's work after first gaining your object, so you are a liar, ungrateful, non-Aryan and mean. Had you any mind to make any return for friendly services, then you would have certainly searched for Janaki. You are addicted to vulgar pleasures and false to your vows. Rama did not know before that, like a snake, you have dissimulated your character, as a snake conceals its dreadful nature by croaking like a frog.[1] You are a villain, noble Rama out of sheer generosity

1 Perhaps to lure frogs to its fatal grip. It is, however, not a fact but a pure fiction.

has conferred upon you the Vanara kingdom. If you forget to render him service, you will without delay follow Vali. The path treated by Vali is not too narrow (to allow you to pass). Fulfil your vow and do not follow Vali. You have not as yet seen the thunderbolt-like shafts discharged from Rama's bow. This is why, being addicted to sensual pleasures you do not think of his affairs."

When Lakshmana was saying all this, flaring up with his energy, the beautiful Tara intervened in the meantime and said, "O hero! Don't speak like this. The chief of the Kapis does not deserve harsh words, specially from your lips. He is neither cruel nor ungrateful, nor a liar, nor a cheat. He has not forgotten what great services have been rendered by Rama. It is on account of the generosity of that hero that he has obtained kingdom and fame and got Ruma and myself. But to tell the truth, Sugriva suffered for a long time and has recently got taste of pleasure. Therefore he could not attend to his duties in due time. You see saint Visvamitra being infătuated by the heavenly nymph Ghritachi regarded ten long years as one day! When such a virtuous man can be indifferent to his duties, then what to speak of ordinary people? O hero! Sugriva is now under the spell of animal desires. He is quite fatigued and he has not yet been fully satiated. This is the reason of delay. Worthless persons get angry without enquiring into the cause of a thing. So don't be swayed by anger like a low-born man without knowing anything. I do now apologise for Sugriva.

Please forbear your wrath. Sugriva for Rama's well-being can give up kingdom, wealth, paddy, cattle and even Ruma and myself. He will restore Janaki to Rama's hand after slaying Ravana. In Lanka there are hundreds of millions of formidable Rakshasas It will be difficult to slay Ravana without destroying them. Lord Vali knew the number of Ravana's army and this is what I had heard from him. However, Ravana is formidable, and Rama is helpless and it will be difficult for Rama to destroy Ravana unless he takes Sugriva's help. Now Sugriva has sent envoys in different directions to collect Vanara troops. Those Vanaras will help you. He cannot set out to Rama's work till their arrival. Owing to the excellent arrangement that have been made by Sugriva, all are expected to arrive, here even to-day. Millions of Bhallukas and Vanaras will go to you to-day. O hero ! Your eyes have become red with anger. Hence we cannot look at Sugriva's face, fearing that he may lose his life."

At this, Lakshmana was pacified by the reasonable speech of Tara. Thereupon, Sugriva cast off his fear as a piece of soiled cloth, and tore away the charming garland encircling his neck. His intoxication gradually subsided and he humbly submitted to the satisfaction of Lakshmana, "O hero ! I have got back my kingdom and reputation through the kindness of Rama. Rama is famous for his achievements in the world. It is impossible for me even to return one hundredth part of his kind services. Now, he will conquer by his own valour with my nominal help, and Janaki will soon be recovered.

What assistance needs he who can pierce seven palms, rocks and the nether region with one shaft, and at whose twanging of the bow the earth trembles with its hills and forests ? When he will set out with his troops for the destruction of Ravana, I shall only follow his footsteps, O hero ! I am your obedient servant. If I have committed any offence, please forgive me for love and confidence. You see a servant may transgress at every step."

Thereupon, Lakshmana replied with delight, "Sugriva, having got such a modest soul as you as his help, the worshipful Rama is really strong to-day. Your prowess is indeed wonderful and you are capable of controlling your senses. So you are worthy of enjoying the best things of the Vanara kingdom. Now, it is apparent that mighty Rama with your help will soon be able to destroy the wicked Ravana. The heroic Rama is truthful and virtuous, and what you have said about him is quite worthy of you. Except thyself and Rama who else can speak of his rival like this ? In strength and valour you are like Rama. It is due to our good luck that we have got such a help after a long time. Now come with me to Rama. He has been much upset for Janaki's separation. Go and console him. He is deeply lamenting the loss of his darling, and it is for that, that I have spoken such hard things to you. Please excuse me."

CHAPTER XXIX

SUGRIVA'S DIRECTIONS

Then the lord of the Vanaras turned to Hanuman by his side and said, "Fetch the Vanaras that dwell in the Himalayas, Vindhya, Kailasa, Dhavalashekhara, Mandara, and Mahendra hills, on the other side of the sea, those who live in the west, and those who reside in the Udayagiri and the Astagiri, and those Vanaras having the strength of elephants and of collyrium-like hue, those who live in the Padmachala and Anjana hill, those who live in the Meru side, in the great caves, Dhumrachala, beautiful hermitages, fragrant woods, go and also soon fetch those Vanaras of golden hue that dwell in the Maharuna mountain, drinking Maireya wine. Formerly, many swift envoys have been despatched for this. Ask those who are dilatory or addicted to pleasure to come soon. And those who will not arrive within ten days will be punished with death for violating royal commands. Let hundreds of Vanaras set out without delay. Let the space underneath the sky be covered with mighty Vanara hosts, like sable clouds. Let those who are adept in travelling, speedily collect all the Vanaras of the world."

Thereupon, Hanuman sent mighty Vanaras in different directions. Then, at once, the Vanaras flew through air.[1] and informed the Vanaras living in the hills, forests, on river bank, sea-shores, caves and other places. Vanaras living in distant quarters came flocking

1 What does it mean? The original expression is *gaganachari*, *i. e.*, one who moves in the sky.

in fear of Death-like Sugriva. Three million monkeys arrived from the Anjana hill, ten million from the Shitachala and hundreds of millions from the Kailasa mountain and those who lived in the Himalayas subsisting on fruit and roots arrived by thousands ; dreadful Vanaras of charcoal hue rushed from the Vindhya hill. Those who lived on the shore of the milky sea and in the Jamala woods and subsisted mainly on cocoanuts and those who took shelter in caves and rivers came, as if darkening the sky.

The envoys saw a famous tree in the Himalaya. Formerly, in that sacred hill sacrifice was celebrated for the satisfaction of gods. There they found delicious fruit and roots sprung from the stream of oblations offered in that sacrifice. The Vanaras—fond of fruits—for the gratification of Sugriva collected excellent fruits, roots, odourous and medicinal herbs

After informing all the Vanaras and asking them to expedite, they came back to Kishkindhya. After presenting fruit and flowers to Sugriva they said, "O king ! We travelled through the hills, forests and rivers and informed all the Vanaras, and they will soon arrive." At this Suriva was exceedingly pleased and he dismissed them after greeting the successful envoys.

After this, the brave Lakshmaṇa, to Sugriva's delight said, "O chief of the Kapis, if you permit let us leave Kishkindhya."

Sugriva was exceedingly delighted at these sweet

words of Lakshmana. "Let us go, your word is a mandate to me. Let us now depart."

Saying this he dismissed Tara and other women and called aloud his servants. Then those servants who were allowed to visit the inner compartments appeared before him with joined palms. Then Sugriva, of red hue, said, "My men! Soon fetch me a conveyance." Thereupon, the servants brought a conveyance, and Sugriva asked Lakshmana to get upon it.

After that, Sugriva with Lakshmana got into a glittering golden conveyance. A white umbrella spread over their heads, white yak-tails were waved and conch-shells and trumpets were blown and the minstrels sang their hymns of praise. Sugriva had ascended the throne, so he started with all the pomp of a king. A large number of proud and fierce Vanaras went with him, armed with various weapons.

At a short distance, stood the asylum of Rama. Sugriva along with Lakshmana got down from the conveyance and stood before Rama with joined palms. Other Vanaras humbly waited by the side of the lake, strewn with lotus buds.

Rama was greatly pleased seeing Sugriva and his Vanara hosts. Sugriva bowed down at Rama's feet. Rama raised him up and after embracing him with honour and deep regard said, "My friend! Take your seat." Sugriva then sat upon the ground. Thereupon Rama said "My friend, he is a king who in proper seasons follows righteousness, pleasure and wealth, dividing his time among them. And he who devotes himself to pleasure

renouncing what is good and righteousness, is like a man that falls asleep on the top of a tree and awakes when he falls down. That king is virtuous who is engaged in destroying his enemies and helping his friends and he attains his desired ends. Oh, hero! The time has arrived for making preparations for war, so you should consult with your ministers."

Sugriva said, "My friend! I have retrieved my kingdom and friends through your favour. He who receives a good office and does not requite it, is extremely vicious. Now, Vanaras have arrived from all the quarters of the world. The Golangulas and Bhallukas acquainted with forests and fortresses are waiting with their armies. Oh, hero! The chiefs with their men will join you in the war and bring back Janaki." The virtuous Rama was greatly pleased seeing the warlike preparations of Sugriva, and in his delight he looked exceedingly beautiful, like a blue lotus, and embracing Sugriva repeatedly, Rama said, "There is nothing to wonder at that Indra will pour down rains, that the Sun will illumine darkness, that the moon will render the night bright with her rays,—rather it is their nature to do so; so there is nothing strange that a virtuous friend like you will do what is agreeable to his friend. Now I find that you are really of sweet speech and with your help I shall be able to destroy Ravana with his brood. You are my friend and it is proper for you to help me now. In the days of yore, Anulada carried off Sachi, the daughter of proud Puloma, but Indra recovered Sachi by killing him. Thus the wicked Rakshasa has

carried away Janaki for his own death, and I shall soon recover her after his destruction."

Suddenly, the sky was covered with dust which screened the bright rays of the sun. Gradually, everything was enveloped in darkness and the earth with hills and forests began to shake. At a short distance, the Vanara army was seen proceeding from forests and hills, with a deep rumbling noise like that of thunder. The whole space seemed to have been covered with the Vanara hosts. These armies were endowed with great prowess and with sharp teeth. They were crimson in hue like the rising sun, white as the moon and yellow like the pollens of the lotus.[1]

Nila, Gavaya, Darimukha, Aswikumar; Maindya, Dvivida, Jamvana, Rumana, Gandhamadana, Angada, *Indrajana, Rambha, Durmukha, Hanuman and others* came with millions and millions[2] of Vanaras. Then Sharava, Kumuda, Vanhi and other heroes arrived. Some of them sat down, some of them frisked about, while others set up heroic yells.

They proceeded towards Sugriva like hosts of clouds and after greeting offered their services and they all stood with their joined palms.

Then Sugriva congnisant of kingly duties introduced[3] the chiefs to Rama and then asked them to retire where they liked, and asked them who were versed in military arts to make a selection of the army.

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1 The description appears to be quite perplexing.

2 There is no limit to hyperboles in ancient epics.

3 Quite a modern custom.

CHAPTER XXX

DIRECTIONS TO THE CHIEFS

Thus after being successful in collecting the army, Sugriva said to Rama, "My friend! Those Vanaras, *irresistible like Indra, who live within my jurisdiction*, have arrived and are living in military barracks. They are formidable as giants and dreadful to look at, their prowess is well-known in the field of battle. They are very hardy and active, some of them reside in the hills, some of them in islands and some in forests. These Vanaras are your servants, are obedient to me and wellmeaning, and there are mighty forces under them. They will surely be able to achieve our object. What shall I say more, all those forces are at your command. Though I have not forgotten about the search for Janaki, yet you just order them to do as you like."

Then Rama embracing Sugriva said, "My friend! Ascertain first whether Janaki is alive or not, and where Ravana lives. Find out his whereabouts. After that we shall do the needful. We shall not give any orders to the Vanaras. You are their master and the cause of this present undertaking; so you yourself ask them to do what you think to be proper. O hero! Nothing is unknown to you. You are wise and have knowledge of time and season for every thing. You are my friend, well-wisher and an object of absolute confidence."

After that, Sugriva addressing the mighty-voiced Vinata said, "O hero! You are versed in morality,

sagacious in deciding course of duties and have knowledge of time and place. You take with you a thousand powerful Vanaras and set out for the east and search, and gather informations about Janaki and Ravana. You should search rivers like the Ganges, the Jamuna, the Sarayu, the Kaushaki, the Saraswati, the Sindhu, the Sona, the Mahi and the Kalamahi and search through the provinces of Kalinda Giri, Brama Mal, Videha, Malva, Kashi, Koshala, Magadha, Mahagram, Pundra, Anga, the land of silver mines. Search through islands, hills, and abodes on the summit of the Mandara Mountain. Also search through the houses in the Manadra inhabited by people having ears resembling cloths,[1] reaching their either lips and faces hard and black as iron They are one-footed but quick in their movements. Also search for her among the descendants of those who are indestructible ; go among the carnivorous Rakshasas, good-looking hunters living in islands, and amongst them who have bristling hair, yellow complexion, and who live upon uncooked flesh. Search among those dreadful beings who have the form of a tiger and a man, who live inside water, those who swim like peaks, who sometimes trot like a horse, and who sometimes go about in crafts. Go to the Yava island divided into seven kingdoms and to the gold and silver islands You will come across the Sisir mountain whose peaks kiss the heaven. The Gods and the Danavas always live there. Do you search for Sita in mountains and forests in these islands. Search for

1 Perhaps it means long ears in metaphor.

Janaki and Ravana in the beautiful places of pilgrimage, and romantic forests standing on the banks of the fastflowing Sona with red waters near the sea-shore, visited by the saints and Charanas Search through mountain-caves, dreadful forests, gardens, islands and along the banks of rivers.

"After that, lies the terrible Ikshu ocean; there live huge Asuras hungry from a long time; they by the permission of Brahma feed upon creatures concealing themselves under the shadows. That ocean is dark as the clouds and roar with huge billows raised by the wind. Huge snakes are found in it. Somehow crossing that ocean arrive at the Red Sea. Its water is red and there stands a big Salmali tree and at a short distance from it is the jewelled house of Garuda, the king of birds[1]. It was built with great care by the divine architect, Viswakarma. Here are hideous-looking Rakshasas called Mandeha, huge as mountain-peaks, and they hang with their heads downwards Day after day they are scorched by the heat of the sun and fall into the sea being destroyed by the energy of Brahma, but they revive again, and again hang down on the cliffs.[2]

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1 Certainly it can not literally mean birds. We think a race of people is meant as Birds.

2 It is difficult to decipher all these, perhaps it alludes to some natural phenomenon—probably to clouds resting on the hills. They rise from the sea by the sun's rays and then fall again into it as rains and this process is eternally repeated.

"Then lies the Kshiroda ocean, the ocean of milk. It is white like the autumnal clouds and the waves adorning its breasts are like a pearl-necklace. There stands a white cliff called the Rishabha in it, and in that there are various trees rich in blossoms, and there is a beautiful lake name Sudarsana. In that lake bloom silver-white lotuses with golden filaments. It is always visited by swans and gods, Yakshas, Charanas, Kinnaras, and nymphs for amorous sports.

"Then comes the dreadful Jalada ocean, where exists the mighty fire of Brahmarshi named Aurva in the form of the mouth of a horse. That fire at the end of a cycle of creation consumes the whole world with its movable and immovable things. All aquatic animals always shrink from fear at the sight of that dreadful fire,[1] and their cries are heard from a long distance. On the north coast of that Ocean there is a mountain with lustre of gold called Kanakashila It extends to thirteen *Yojanas*. There you will come across Ananta, the upholder of the world, and who is worshipped by all the gods His silver-white body is clad in blue apparel. He has a thousand heads and his eyes are expanded like the leaves of a lotus. There a golden palm tree with three ridges is seen on the peak standing on a dais,—Indra reared it on the east

"Then lies the golden Udaya hill, and a large number of cliffs kissing the sky have risen several leagues

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1 Apparently it refers to the volcanic fire sometimes noticed in the sea.

from the ground. There are found golden Karnikara blossoms and bright Sals and palms. There is a golden cliff named Saumana six miles[1] in length and ten *Yojanas* in height. In the days of yore, Vishnu at the time of encompassing the three worlds with three paces[2] planted one foot on this mountain and his second foot on the Sumeru hill. In the golden age, the sun was seen in the Jamvudwipa when it ascended the hill through the north Resplendent Rishis like Vaikhanasha, Valakhilya and others live there. By its influence the creatures get light and sight of visible things. At a little distance from it is the Sudarshana island. Here every day the twilight of the evening grows crimson by the halo of the golden mountain and by the rays of the sun. The Udaya hill reveals the world and it is the gateway of the heaven. The sun rises in this quarter which is called the east. You should search the heart of this mountain, its caves, rills, forests and valleys for Janaki and Ravana. Beyond this no living creature can go. That space is covered with darkness, it is invisible and boundless, there only resides the presiding Deity of that quarter. We do not know anything existing beyond the Udaya hill. Now you shall search all the places, rivers and hills mentioned by me and also those that I have forgotten to mention. Search all possible places. Return after the expiry of a month or you will be punished with death. Go ye Vanaras! Soon return after accomplishing the task."

1 6 miles make one Yojana.

2 This in fact refers to the three positions of the sun in the sky, in the morning, noon and in the evening.

CHAPTER XXXI

SUGRIVA'S DIRECTIONS

Then Sugriva despatched towards the south heroic Nila, Agniputra, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, the son of the Grandsire of creation, Suhotra, Sharasi, Sharagulma, Gaya, Gavaksha, Sharabha, Sushena, Brishabha, Maindya, Divilla, Gandhamadan, Ulkamukha, Ananga and made Angada and Brihadvaja their leaders. He then described to them various inaccessible places :

"You will first repair to the Vindhya Hills having hundreds of peaks, abounding in trees and shrubs and there you will find the Mahanadi full of snakes, the Godavari, the Narmada and the Krishnaveni. Then go to Mekhal, Utkal, Vidarbha, Matsya, Kalinga, Kausika, Ristika, Mahisak, Darsan, Avravanti and Avanti. Then search through the Dandaka forest—through its hills and caves. Afterwards go to Andhra, Pundra, Chola and Kerala province. You will find there the Malaya Hills, its peaks are beautiful and are tinged with minerals and there are excellent sandal woods, flowery trees, and the transparent Kaveri flows there. The nymphs always sport in its stream. You will meet there the sage Agastya ; greet him with your praise. Then with his permission cross the Tamraparni full of crocodiles and sharks. This stream being hidden in sandal woods flows towards the ocean, as a young beauty goes secretly to her lord.

"Then go to Province of Pandya. You will see there the golden city-gate worked with gems and pearls. Beyond Pandya lies the sea. Sage Agastya placed the

Mahendra Hill in its middle for crossing the waters. Mir Mountain is of gold and is very beautiful with flowers, creepers and trees. A portion of this hill is merged in this sea. Denizens of heaven, Nymphs, Yakshas, Siddhas and Charanas roam about there, even the king of gods, Indra, visits the spots.

"On the other side of the sea an island is seen. It extends to hundred *yojanas* and is lustrous like gold. Men cannot go there. That island is the abode of Indra—like Ravana. In that sea there lives a Rakshasi named Angaraka. She draws all creatures by her shadow and devours them. You search through the secret places of that island fearlessly.

"In the Southern ocean of hundred *yojanas* there is a mountain called Puspitaka; its lofty peaks kiss the sky and it is inhabited by the resplendent, Siddhas and Charanas[1] Atheists, deceitful and ungrateful people cannot see the peak that is approached by the sun. Salute the mountain and search for Sita through its creek and corner. After that stands the Sun hill. It extends to fourteen *yojanas* and you cross that mountain by an arduous path. After it lies the Lighting hill. In that beautiful hill, trees and plants bear all sorts of flowers and fruits, and after partaking of their excell-ent fruits and after drinking delicious honey go to Kunjara hill, delightful to the mind and the eyes; there Viswakarma built the house for the sage Agastya. It is

1 They seem to be superhuman beings, but it is significant that they have been repeatedly mentioned in all ancient Sanskrit poems.

one *yojana* long and ten *yojanas* high and is made of gold and jewels, In that hill there is a city of the Pannagas called Bhagavati. It is always guarded by sharp-toothed, venomous snakes. Its highways are wide and in the city lives their king Vasuki. Enter that inaccessible spot and search through its hidden places"[1] After that stands the Rishabha hill like a bull. It is full of gem and is exceedingly resplendent. In that hill excellent sandal wood known as Goshirsha, Padma and Harishyam is found. Don't ask any body anything about those sandals The forest is guarded by a number of formidable Gandharvas called Rohita and there reside five Gandharva chiefs named Shailush, Gramone, Shikshan, Lhuka, and Babhru. The earth ends after that Rishabha Mountain and the region beyond it is inhabited by resplendent saints. O Kapi chiefs! After that lies the city of death It is the dark and dreadful region of the manes of our ancestors. No living creature can go there. However, search for Sita in the places I have mentioned to you and also those places that you may come across in your journey He who will be able to return within a month with the information that he has seen Janaki will be as rich as myself, and I shall consider him dearer to me than life, and he shall ever remain my friend though he may commit offence after offence. O Vanaras! The record of your valour is unbroken; you are born of noble families and have great accomplishments. So work now that you may secure information about princess Janaki"

1 These Puranik legendary Nagas and Pannagas (snakes) have been identified by the oriental scholars with the Non-Aryan primitive people of India who after the Aryan conquest took their shelter in mountain fortresses, caves and forests.

CHAPTER XXXII

FURTHER DIRECTIONS

Then Sugriva approached his father-in-law, Sushena exceedingly strong and dark as a cloud. After bowing to him with joined palms he asked him to search for Janaki. Then turning to intelligent Archisman Archmaya and Maricha, he said, "O Vanaras! Follow Sushena with a hundred thousand Vanaras towards the west. Go to Saurashtra, Valhika, Chandra-Chitra, and other rich provinces. Visit large cities and hill-sides abounding in Pannagas, Vakulas, Uddalakas and Utakas, crystal streams flowing to the west, forest, hermitages, deserts, hills and mountain fastness and, search for Sita. At a short distance, you will come across the western ocean ever agitated by the whales, sharks, crocodiles and other sea-monsters. Your troops will rest under the shadow of Tamals, Ketakis and cocoanut trees After that (you will meet) Murachi-pathan, Jatapur, Avanti, Angalepa, and the forest called Alakshita, and at a short distance from there you will find the junction of the Indus (Sindhu) and the sea. There is the wooded hill Chandragiri with a hundred peaks. In its tableland there is a class of birds known as the Sinhas They pick up and carry to their nests whales, and elephants and roam about there with a deep rumbling noise. Search there the lofty peaks of the Chandragiri and the nests of the Sinha birds.

"In this ocean lies the Parijat mountain. Its golden cliffs are hundred *yojanas* high and there live twenty-four millions of fiery Gandharvas. Never go near them

and do not touch any fruits or roots there. Those vicious and dreadful Gandharvas always guard them. If you move about with apish cunning, you will have nothing to be afraid of.

"You will then meet the Vajra hill, hard as the thunderbolt. Its length and height are a hundred *yojanas* and it is covered with wonderful trees and creepers and its forest is blue like the *lapis lazuli*. Carefully look for Janaki through them.

"After crossing one-fourth of the sea you will come across another hill known as the Chakravana mountain. There Viswakarma constructed a wheel with a thousand spikes. Vishnu, the foremost of the male creation, procured from that place a conch and the wheel by slaying two demons named Panchjana and Hayagriva. The hill has spacious caves and beautiful peaks. Look for Janaki and Ravana there. After that stands the Varaha Mountain, which extends to sixty-four *yojanas*. There lies the city of Pragjyotish[1] and there lives a wicked Danava named Naraka. Then you will find the Sauvarna hill, fountains and rills flow through it; wild tigers, lions, elephants, bears roam about it. Another name of Sauvarna is Negha. Formerly, the gods on this hill invested the crown on Indra. Now Indra is its protector. Having passed by that mountain you will come across sixty thousand hill. They are of crimson hue like the rising sun and there you will find golden trees laden with fruits and flowers. Sumeru is the chief of these hills. Formerly, the sun-god being

1 Modern Assam.

pleased with Sumeru blessed it saying, "Sumeru! Whatever thing might attach to you, by my grace will turn into gold, and those gods and the Gandharvas that take shelter in you will be of golden hue and devoted to me. On this hill in the evening Viswadeva, Vasus and Marutas worship the Sun when He goes down and becomes invisible. The distance between these two hills is ten thousand *yojanas*, but the sun covers that distance within half a minute.[1] On the summit of the Sumeru, there stands a beautiful white mansion of Varuna. Viswakarma has built it. There are many palaces and trees resounded by the wild notes of various kinds of birds. Behind that hill there stands a stately palm. It is of gold, adorned with ten crowns, and stands on a dais. In the Sumeru lives the virtuous saint Meru Savani, devoted to penance and meditation. He is effulgent like the sun and mighty as Brahma. Bow down to him by touching the ground with your heads and enquire about Janaki. The sun goes down after travelling over the Sumeru. There is no place to go beyond the land of the sun set in a boundless space enveloped in eternal darkness. We don't know anything about it. Now, go as far as I have indicated to you. Return within a month, or you will be punished with death. Sushena will accompany you. Don't disobey his orders; he is my father-in-law and an object of respect. You are intelligent; still search the western region under his guidance. My object is to requite the services of Rama and I shall consider myself fortunate for it.. Do what you think proper in this connection, considering time, place and other things and as situation may arise."

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1. Light travels at the velocity of 1,86,000 miles per second.

CHAPTER XXXIII

DIRECTIONS ABOUT THE NORTH

Sugriva then turning to Shatavali said, "These Vanaras are the offspring of Yama. Take their counsel and being accompanied by other Vanaras like yourself, proceed towards the north adorned by the Himalayas. It is my wish to requite the good services of Rama and thus pay off the debt of obligation. His case is different. I shall consider myself fortunate even if I can help a man with whom I have not the least interest. O heroes! You always wish me good; so devote yourself to Janaki's search. Rama is the adored object of everybody, besides he loves us greatly. So don't be indifferent about his work. Search through the hills and dales of the north by displaying your intelligence and valour. Go to the province of Prasthala, Bharata, Southern Kuru, Madraka and to the lands of the Mleccha, Pulinda, Surasena, Kambhoja, Yavana and Barada. Having repaired to the Himalayas search for Janaki through the tracts of Lodhras,[1] Padmakas, and the pine forest.

"Next, you will come across Somasrama; the Gods and the Gandharvas live there. At a short distance from it, you will find a lofty hill named Kala containing golden ores. Search its caves and tablelands for Janaki. After that rises the Sudarsana hill and after that stands the Devasakha hill. It is full of forests and wild birds, search its caves, rills and Kanchan woods.

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1 A kind of flower. A woman used to powder her face with its white pollens after bath, akin to the modern custom of powdering the face.

"After that, you will come across a vast barren tract of ground. It extends over two hundred *yojanas* in each direction. There is no mountain, river or trees, and no living creature is found there. Speedily cross that dreadful land. After crossing that dreary region go to the white Kailasa, where stands the magnificent palace of Kuvera, the lord of wealth. It is of yellow colour and ornamented with gold. It was built by Viswakarma. In that mountain there is a lake full of lotuses. The nymphs sport in its water and it is always visited by swans, ducks, and here Kuvera, adored by all, sports with the Guhyakas. Search through its tablelands and caves.

"After that comes the Krauncha hill, its caverns are quite inaccessible, enter them very carefully. Great saints, effulgent like the Sun, live there at the request of the gods. After that stands Manasa hill. Formerly God Ananga practised penance in this place. There is no vegetation there, even the gods and the Rakshasas cannot go there.

"After that is the Mainaka hill. There is a palace of Maya Danava. He himself built that palace. There are found women with horse-like faces straying about. After crossing that hill go to the Siddhasram, where live saints like Vaikhanasa and Valakhilya. They have got a tank full of golden lotuses, pink-coloured ducks sport there, and Kuvera's elephant named Sarvabhauma roam there with his mate. After this lies an extensive field. Neither the Sun, the Moon nor the clouds are seen there. Eternal silence reigns there. There saints,

holy as gods do rest. They have got shining bodies like the Sun, and that place is lighted by the effulgence of their bodies. After that flows the Sailoda river. Kichaka bamboos grow along its bank. The Siddhas cross the river by the help of those bamboos.

"After this lies Uttarakuru,[1] the land of the virtuous people. There are good many rivers and lakes. In those streams and lakes are found red lotuses of gold with leaves of blue gems There are found pearls big as the Bimba fruit and precious jewels in plenty. Round about the place there are hills containing gems, and various kinds of trees. The scent, juice and touch of these trees are excellent. Fruit and flowers always grow there, and sweet-singing birds are found in woods; superb apparels,[2] excellent ornaments beset with pearls and *lapis lazuli* are capable of being worn by men and women alike; beds furnished with coverlets, beautiful garlands, palatable food, delicious drinks, beautiful and accomplished young damsels are to be found there. There are Siddhas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. They are holy but are ever engaged in sporting with men. Sweet music and pleasant sound of laughter are always heard there. Every one is happy, and beautiful objects are always found there.

"After that lies the northern sea. The golden Somagiri is situated in that. Though the Sun does not

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1 Perhaps somewhere in northern Asia—it has been mentioned in the Aitareya Brahaman. Vide also B G. Tilak's *Arctic Home in the Vedas*.

2 So Arran in his Indica writes that the India wool grows on trees; apparently he means cotton.

rise in that region, yet it is illumined by the Somagiri.[1] From that it appears that the land is devoid of the brilliancy of the sun. There resides Sambhu, the Soul of the universe and the chief of the gods, being surrounded by the Brahmarshis. He is Rudra, the lord of the universe. Don't attempt to go beyond Uttarakuru. Nobody can go there. It is inaccessible even to the gods. Return after seeing it from a distance. Beyond it lie infinite space and eternal darkness. We do not know anything about it. Vanaras! Go to all places that have been described by me and also to other places which I have omitted to mention. Both myself and Rama will be greatly pleased if you can find out Sita. In short, I shall maintain you with your families with due honour. You too will be able to range about freely with your sweet hearts, being free from all troubles."

CHAPTER XXXIV

INSTRUCTIONS TO HANUMAN

Then Sugriva relying more upon Hanuman for the accomplishment of the difficult task, said, "O hero! Your course is irresistible in heaven and earth, and through the sky. You know fully the regions of the Asuras, Gandharvas, Uragas, of gods and men. Your strength, fleetness and speed are like that of your father, the Wind god. Just think how Janaki can be found out. You are versed in polity and possess extraordinary intelligence, courage and strength. You can frame out a policy and have sense of time and place."

1 Perhaps it refers to Aurora Borealis.

Then Rama thus reflected in his mind, "Sugriva thinks that Hanuman is capable of accomplishing the object, and it also seems to me that my end will be achieved through Hanuman. His valour and intelligence have been well tested. Sugriva considers him to be the best of the lot, so there is no doubt of success if he sets out in quest of Janaki."

Revolving these in mind, Rama seemed to be delighted in expectation of the attainment of his object, and handing over to Hanuman, for Janaki's confidence, a ring with his name engraved on it said, "O hero! By this token, Janaki will be able to know that you have been sent by me and she will then meet you without any suspicion or fear. Considering your perseverance and valour I have not the least doubt of achieving my object."

Thereupon Hanuman took the ring with folded palms. He placed it on his head and bowed down to Rama. Being encircled by the Vanara hosts on all sides he appeared like the stainless Moon surrounded by the stars in the sky.

Then Rama said, "Son of Pavana! You are a hero and powerful as the lion: I entirely depend upon you. Do as you can to find out Janaki."

After that Sugriva addressing the Vanaras said, "Go now, ye heroes, search for Janaki as indicated by me."

The Vanaras bowed down to his mandate and proceeded in different directions like locusts darkening the earth. Heroic Shatavali set out for the north crowned by the Himalayas; Captain Vinata proceeded

towards the east; Hanuman with Angada, Tara and others went to the south; and Sushena towards the dreadful[1] west. Sugriva despatched each one to each direction according to his worth, and Rama waited in expectation of Sita in the Prasravana hill accompanied by Lakshmana.

Then the Vanaras quickly proceeded to their destinations. They filled the sky with their heroic noise, and each one of them said, "I shall rescue Janaki, destroying Ravana." Some one (boastingly) said, "Wait, I shall alone rescue trembling Sita from the nether region slaying Ravana." While another said, "I shall burn trees, pound rocks and dry up the ocean." Some said, "I shall jump a league." "I shall jump ten leagues," gave out another. "I shall jump ten thousand leagues," bragged the third. "I shall speed over the earth, since nothing can resist my way through hills, forests or the sea," said another.

Thus the Vanaras boasted exulting in heroic pride.

CHAPTER XXXV

RAMA'S QUERY

After the departure of the Vanaras in search for Sita, Rama asked Sugriva, "My friend! How could you come to know every part of the globe?"

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1 Maxmuller says that to the primitive people West was always associated with a feeling of horror. It was to them the region of darkness and Death, for the Sun sets in the West, and darkness always brings elements of fear with it.

Thereupon the modest Sugriva replied, "I shall tell you everything ; listen to it, friend !"

"Once upon a time Vali resolved to kill a Danava in shape of a buffalo named Dundubhi. That brute out of fear entered a cave of the Malaya hill, and Vali pursued him. At that time, I patiently waited for Vali at the mouth of the cave. Thus elapsed a long time. I was greatly astonished and sorry at this, and I inferred that my brother was dead. Then to shut Dundubhi I placed a piece of huge stone at the mouth of the cave, and returned to Kishkindhya, and began to live peacefully with my friends, Tara, Ruma and others. In the meantime Vali returned after slaying Dundubhi. I was greatly alarmed at this. I left the kingdom to him and, knowing that my brother wanted to kill me, I ran away with my friends. Vali gave me a hot pursuit.

"During my flight I have seen different countries, hills and forests. At that time the earth appeared to me (small) like the hoof-print[1] of a cow, moving like a fiery wheel, and for the distinct and clear view of everything it appeared like a mirror's polished face that reflects everything distinctly. First, I went towards the east, there I met various hills, forests and lakes. There I saw the Udayagiri, the haunt of the nymphs

1 It indicates the ease with which Sugriva travelled over the earth. Mark also the expression, moving like a fiery wheel. It apparently refers to the revolution of the earth and also to its rotundity. The Hindus knew this long before other nations could dream of such scientific truths. Even the Greeks were ignorant of it.

and the Milky sea. Vali chased me there. Then I turned towards the south. There I met the Vindhya mountain and dense sandal woods where Vali remained concealed. Thence out of fear I went towards the west. There I saw different lands and the Astachala or the hill where the Sun sets. There too Vali pursued me and then I ran to the north and I travelled through the Himalayas and Sumeru and went up to the northern sea. But I could not find shelter anywhere

"After that intelligent Hanuman said to me, 'Formerly, sage Matanga cursed Vali saying that if Vali would enter his hermitage, his head will be crushed into pieces' O king! I remember this, and think that the asylum of Matanga will be a safe place for us. Then I started for that hermitage and since then I have been living in the Rishyamuka hill. Vali could not enter Matanga's hermitage in fear of that curse. My friend! Thus I have seen the whole of the world."

Hanuman with Tara and Angada after searching caves and forests full of ferocious animals reached the south-western peak. It was quite inaccessible on account of caves and forests There Gaya, Gavaksha, Gavaya, Sharabha, Gandhamadan, Mainda, Dwivida, Jamvuvan and others began to search for Janaki at a short distance from one another. There was an open crevice named Riksha Villa That was protected by the Danavas.

It was highly difficult to enter there. When the Vanaras oppressed with thirst and hunger searched for food and water they spied that cave. Swans, ducks, cranes and chakravakas were issuing from that cave

wet with water and tinged with lotus pollens. They were delighted at that sight, but found the cave to be quite inaccessible—a fit place for secret abode of the Danava king.

Then Hanuman addressing the Vanaras—the skilful rangers of forests—said, "You are tired of travelling through the rocky region, and are borne down with hunger and thirst. But, lo, swarms of ducks and cranes are emerging out of that cave drenched with water, and the leaves of the trees at the mouth of the cave are moist. It is clear that there is a lake or pool within. Let us now enter the cave."

Then they entered the cave. It was a dreadful place covered with darkness Wild animals were prowling about hither and thither. But nothing could thwart the vision or vigour of the Vanaras. They walked through darkness in great speed by taking hold of each other. Thus they passed a Yojana, but every one became oppressed with severe thirst and hunger ; everybody's face grew thin and dark, and they despaired of their lives ; at that time suddenly light burst on their view, and they entered a forest, where there was not even a tinge of darkness, and where golden trees shone like columns of fire ! Sal, Tal, Tamala, Punnaga, Vanjula.

Then the Vanaras entered a deep forest and there they met a dreadful Asura. At the sight of the Asura, the Vanaras tightened their loin-cloths and when the Asura challenged them, Angada inflamed with rage for the Danava's destruction struck him with his fist and

the Asura breathed his last vomiting blood. Then the Vanaras elated with victory searched every cave carefully till at last they got tired and took their rest under the trees.

At this, the wise Angada in his exhausted voice encouraged the Vanaras saying, "O Vanaras! We have searched hills, dales, forests and caves, but nowhere could we find Janaki, nor that wicked rover of the night who has carried away Janaki. But the appointed time is about to be over. Stern is Sugriva's command. Let us search for Janaki without minding any suffering or pain. We ought to banish our idleness, sleep and all feelings of pain. Courage and skill are the keynotes of success. We shall certainly reap the fruits of our perseverance and labour. Don't despair, screw up your courage. Sugriva is haughty and he rules with an iron hand and I, therefore, advise this for your welfare. Tell me whether my words are reasonable or not."

Then Gandhamadana, fatigued and oppressed with thirst, with a weak voice added, "You see what the crown-prince had said is well-meaning and sound. Let us again search for Sita in mountain fortresses, hill-forts, forests and rills."

Thereupon, the Vanaras stood up and ascended the silver-mountain looking like a mass of autumnal clouds, and searched for Janaki through the beautiful Lodhra groves and Saptaparna woods. But constant moving about told upon their body and mind, and they again sat down for rest. After removing their fatigue, they again got upon the Vindhya hills and resumed their search.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HANUMAN'S SEARCH

In the meantime the Vanaras were proceeding in utmost speed in quest of Janaki and they searched different countries, hills; forests, lakes and streams.

They travelled during the day, and at night rested in places abounding in fruits and flowers.

Thus nearly a month from the date of their departure was completed. Then the Vanaras gave up the quest in despair and began to return War-like Vinata with his colleagues came back from the east; Shatavali from the west; and Sushena with his hosts from the south. Sugriva was by the side of Rama in the Prasravana hill. They came to him and after due greetings said, "O king! We have searched thoroughly hills, dales, dense forests, groves, cities, provinces, islands and many inaccessible places, yet could not find any trace of Janaki. Hanuman has proceeded towards the southern direction. Wonderful is his valour and we doubt not that he will succeed in ascertaining the whereabouts of Janaki."

In the meantime Hanuman with Angada and Tara was journeying through the south. He arrived at the Vindhya hills in company of other Vanaras and searched its forests, caves and valleys, but could not find Janaki anywhere. Gradually they entered into more and more dense forests and then arrived at a place where the trees were destitute of fruits and flowers, where the streams were dry, and where there was no lotus, where roots were scarce, and where no animal or plant could

be found. Formerly a sage named Kandu lived there. He was truthful, austere and full of anger. Kandu had a son of ten. That boy died in that forest; at that Kandu flew into a rage and cursed the forest. Since then the place had become dreary like that. The Vanaras searched that place too. But nowhere they found any trace of Sita or of Ravana.

Dhava, Champaka, Naga and flowery Karnika stood there with their red leaves, golden bunches, and summits covered with creepers. Those trees were shining like the newly risen sun and had platforms of *lapis lazuli* round their bright trunks. Somewhere stood flowery creepers of the deep blue, full of bees, somewhere stood crystal lakes full of golden fishes and excellent lotuses. At some places stood seven-storied buildings worked with gold[1], silver and *lapis lazuli* with balconies of gold covered with screens of pearls. At some places, trees of coral hue were bent down with the weight of fruit and flowers with golden bees (hovering on them). The Vanaras saw there beds and seats worked with gold and gems, vessels of gold, silver and bed-metal and at another place, heaps of Aguru, Sandal flowers, variegated blankets, excellent clothes, delicious wines, palatable fruits and costly conveyances.

Then they met an ascetic woman at some distance. She was clad in a black deer skin and was of spare diet. She was glowing with her own energy like fire. The

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1 In the original it means building made of gold and silver ornamented with *lapis lazuli*.

Vanaras were greatly astonished at her sight, and stood round.

Then Hanuman interogated her with folded palms, "Tell me, O nun ! Who art thou and to whom belong this place, these houses and jewels ?"

CHAPTER XXXVII

NUN SWAYAMPRABHA

Hanuman again said, "Being oppressed with thirst and hunger we have entered this place. Everything is wonderful here, and we have been greatly astonished. In a word, we have been both frightened and bewildered. To whom do these gold and silver palaces with golden windows covered with nets of pearls belong ? To whom do these golden trees, delicious food, golden lotuses, fishes and tortoises belong ? Are these the products of your asceticism, or of that of another ? In fact, we do not know anything about it. Just narrate everything

Then the nun replied, "My boy ! Formerly, there lived a Danava named Maya. He is known as Viswakarma amongst the Danavas. This Maya propitiated Brahma, Lord of the creation, by his penances, and through the blessings of Brahma he learnt the science of mechanics. He has built these beautiful palaces of gold and silver."

"After that, the Danava King, Maya, began to live here enjoying all these luxuries and wealth. At that time he became attached to a nymph named Hema.

Thereupon the king of gods, Indra, destroyed him by thunder. Later on, Brahma bestowed all these upon Hema. I am Meru-Savarni's daughter, my name is Swayamprabha. Hema is my dear mate. She is skilful in music and dancing. I am protecting all these things for her. Now tell me why have you come to this dense forest? How could you come to know of this place? I am offering you palatable fruits and roots, and delicious drinks. Just remove your fatigue and after that narrate to me everything."

The ascetic woman again said, "If your fatigue has been removed after refreshment, tell me everything."

Then Hanuman replied without any reserve, "O nun! King Dasaratha's son, Rama, has come to the Dandaka forest with his brother Lakshmana and his wife, Sita. He is the lord of all, and mighty as Indra and Varuna. Wicked Ravana has carried off his wife from Janasthana. Sugriva, the king of Kapis, is his dear friend. He has asked us to search for Sita and Ravana, and at his command we are proceeding towards the south. O worshipful lady, we have searched everything here, but could not find Janaki.

"When we were stricken with thirst and hunger and were at a loss to decide our course of action, we suddenly spied this cave, enveloped in darkness. I asked the Vanaras to enter as I inferred the existence of some lake in the locality. This is why we have come here. We are almost dead with hunger and thirst, and you have saved us by your generous offer. Now tell me what we can do in return."

Thereupon, Swayamprabha said, "I have been much pleased with your words. It is my duty to do all this, except that I have nothing else to crave for."

At this, Hanuman replied, "O pious lady ! We now ask for your protection. Sugriva has fixed one month's time for searching for Janakī, but that period has expired. Now come to our rescue. We have been greatly frightened for our violating Sugriva's mandate. O honourable lady ! Of highly responsible duty has been entrusted to us, but everything will be frustrated if we remain confined here"

Then the ascetic woman replied, "You see, one who enters here cannot escape with his life. I shall, however, save you by virtue of my spiritual powers ; just close your eyes or it will be difficult to succeed."

Thereupon, the Vanaras in expectation of their exit, cheerfully closed their eyes with their beautiful fingers Then the nun got them out of the cave in a moment and assuring them said, "There stands the fair Vindhya mountain, there is the Prasravana hill, and there lies the deep at a short distance. May good happen to you. Let me now depart."

Saying this Swaymaprabha re-entered the cave.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ANGADA'S DESPAIR

When Vanaras came out, they saw the shoreless cean rolling before them with its thundering waves.

A month had already expired in exploring the

regions of Maya, and now arriving at the foot of the Vindhya they began to cogitate. In the meantime the spring appeared and the trees bowed down with flowers and became covered with creepers. They were greatly alarmed at this.

Then the Crown-prince Angada respectfully addressing the elderly Vanaras gently said, "Hear me, Vanaras, we have set out at the command of Sugriva, but we have been delayed by entering this cave. We set out with the understanding that we would finish the search within Karttika but that appointed period has expired. Now decide what to do. You are versed in polity, you are skilful, war-like and famous. You have set out with me at Sugriva's command, but if you return being unsuccessful you will surely meet with death. Who can be happy by violating the commandment of the Vanara chief? Since the appointed period is over, we should starve ourselves to death.

"Sugriva is stern by nature. He is our master and he won't forgive us for our fault. He will certainly punish us for failing to find out Sita. So let us starve ourselves to death renouncing our home, family and wealth. The king will punish us severely if we return. So it is better to die here. You see, Sugriva himself has not appointed me as heir-apparent to the throne, but Rama, Sugriva bears me grudge from before, so he will punish me severely for this transgression. Why should my friends and relations find me in distress? I should rather starve myself to death on this sacred shore of the sea."

The Vanaras at this sorrowfully remarked, "Sugriva is haughty and Rama is a hen-pecked husband. The appointed time is over, and if we now return without any information of Janaki, Sugriva will kill us for the satisfaction of Rama. One must not return to his master after committing an offence. We are chief amongst Sugriva's attendants. Either we should return with information of Janaki, or we should die in this place."

Then heroic Tara finding the Vanaras thus panic-stricken said, "O Kapis! Don't be cast down with melancholy thoughts. If all of you approve, we may live in this cave. This has been built by the art of Maya and it is inaccessible and there is also plenty of meat and drink. Besides there is no scarcity of flowers and water here. If we live here, we shall have no occasion to fear either Indra, Rama, Sugriva or anybody else."

The Vanaras were pleased at these words, and they said in delight, "So improvise some means with undivided attention so that we may escape the penalty of death."

Angada had clear intelligence.[1] He was an adept in polity[2] and possessed many rare virtues.[3] He listen-

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1 Capacity for devotion, listening, or power of appreciation, attending, retaining, debating, discussing, understanding of meaning and of truth are the right adjuncts of a clear intelligence.

2 Equity, Charity, Division and Punishment.

3 Knowledge of time and place, firmness, power of endurance, omniscience, skill in secret counsels, harmlessness, spiritendness, heroism, faith, gratitude, protection

ed to Tara's advice as Indra did attentively listen to the words of Sukracharya, the preceptor of the Daityas. His valour and courage were bright like the effulgence of the full moon. He was greatly fatigued in carrying out the behest of Sugriva. Then Hanuman well-versed in all the branches of learning, understood from his behaviour that the vast Vanara kingdom was not in his luck He attempted to change his mind and to create difference of opinion amongst the Vanaras.

Then Hanuman frightening Angada with alarming words began, "O prince ! You are more skilful in war than Vali, and you are capable of bearing the burden of the vast Vanara kingdom like him. But the Vanaras are naturally a fickle race, and living here without their wives and children they will never carry out your words And I say it openly that you will not succeed even by your policy of divide and rule, to draw Jamvuvan, Neela, Suhotra and myself from Sugriva's side. The weak may live by incurring hostility of the strong, but self-defence is indispensable for the weak. Great mischief will ensue from this quarrel. You think this cave safe from Tara's words, but it will be an easy thing for Lakshmana to penetrate into it. Formerly, little injury was done to this cave by Indra's thunderbolt but Lakshmana will break it down easily like the

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of the refugee who has taken shelter, non-anger and restlessness are the fourteen vritues. All the above have been alluded to in the original that speaks of eight kinds of intelligence, four kinds of polity and fourteen virtues which Angada possessed.

stalk of a leaf with his keen arrows, which rive cliffs like a thunder-bolt. O hero! As soon as you will put up here, the Vanaras will leave you. They will never comply with your request, suffering from hunger rolling in miseries and anxious for their wives and children. At that moment you will be bereft of your friends and well-wishers, and then you will start with fear even at the rustling of a blade of grass. But if with humility you approach Sugriva with us, he will confer on you the kingdom for your being the next heir.

"Sugriva is truthful, pious and pure, and he bears you a great affection; so he won't put you to death The chief of the Kapis ever loves your mother most ardently: in short, as if he bears his life just to please her, and your mother too has no other issue. Angada, so let us return home."

Hearing Hanuman's submissive speech that was reasonable and that evinced great devotion towards the master, Angada replied, "O hero! Sugriva has not got any patience, purity, sincerity or generosity. These virtues do not exist in him He who takes the wife of his elder brother, a mother unto him, is indeed, a hateful creature. Vali posted this wicked fellow as a guard, but this villain came back stopping the tunnel with a rock. How can you call him virtuous? He is certainly extremely ungrateful who could even forget Rama with whom he had contracted friendship for his own good. Fear of sin is a different thing, he has despatched us simply out of his fear of Lakshmana. Sugriva is ungrateful, vicious and fickle. He has violated the sacred

injunctions of Shastras and none of his relations will believe him. Be he virtuous or not, I am the son of his enemy and surely he will not spare my life. All these will be disclosed to him. I am helpless and weak, how can I then return to Kishkindhya and live there as destitute? That cruel fellow will surely get rid of me as a thorn by the side of his throne, either by hanging or by solitary confinement. So death from starvation is preferable to me. O Vanaras! Give me your leave and go back. I swear, I shall never return to Kishkindhya. You convey my respectful greetings to King Sugriva, the heroic Rama and Lakshmana and to the worshipful Ruma. Mother Tara is naturally attached to her son; she will surely die, if she hears the news of my death. Just console her with proper words"

Saying this, Angada greeted the aged Vanaras with tearful eyes and stretched himself on the grass. Thereupon, the Vanaras burst into tears and they began to praise Vali and Angada and to speak ill of Sugriva.

They too then decided to starve themselves to death and after their ablutions they sat round Angada facing the east. At that time, following the example of Angada, each one prayed for death, while talking amongst themselves about Rama's exile, Dasaratha's death, conquest of Janasthana, abduction of Sita, death of Jatayu, destruction of Vali and Rama's anger from the beginning. At that time, the noise of the mighty Vanaras like the deep roaring of the sea drowned the gentle murmuring of the mountain rill.

CHAPTER XXXIX

SAMPATI

The long-lived Sampati lived in that Vindhya mountain. He was the brother of Jatayu and his valour was known to all. He emerged from his cave and finding the Vanaras resolved to die, said, "In this world everything happens according to the acts done in one's prior birth. After a long time my food has appeared before me! I shall eat these Vanaras one after another, after they give up their ghosts."

Angada was much grieved hearing these words of the greedy Vulture, and addressing Hanuman said, "Look! Death itself has come for the Vanaras in the guise of a bird! Now, we could not execute the royal command, nor could achieve Rama's work. Look, danger is ahead, you have all heard what Jatayu did for Janaki. Every living being, even beast and birds of the forest, is doing its utmost for Rama. We too shall give up our lives for him. We have exhausted ourselves, but could not find Janaki as yet. Jatayu is happy, for he died in fighting, and thus was saved from Sugriva's hand. What incalculable mischief has been done by King Dasaratha by granting Kaikeyi's prayers. Consequently Rama was exiled into the forest with Lakshmana and Sita. Vali was slain and ultimately the Rakshasas will be destroyed."

Hearing these painful words, the sharp-beaked Sampati sorrowfully said, "Who is it that has struck my heart by the news of dear Jatayu's death? I hear his name after a very long time. I feel gratified hearing about the

virtue of my younger brother. O Kapis! Tell me how Jatayu met with his end, how he contracted friendship with death? My wings have been scorched by the rays of the sun. I wish you to take me down from the mountain." The Vanaras were afraid of Sampati, so they could not confide in his words though his voice was faltering in grief. They anticipated some cruel mischief from the moment they sighted him. They said among themselves, 'We are now fasting; if the vulture eats us, our wish will be fulfilled.'

At last, Angada having brought down Sampati from the peak said, "O bird! Mighty Rikshataj was my grandfather. He had two sons, the pious Vali and Sugriva. I am Vali's son. Vali's heroic deeds are known to all. Now, lord of the earth, the heroic Ikshwaku prince Rama, along with his brother Lakshmana and wife Janaki has come to the Dandaka forest at the behest of his father. Ravana has carried off his wife from Janasthana. Jatayu, who was friend to Rama's father, witnessed this, broke Ravana's chariot and brought down Sita. Jatayu was old and was borne down with fatigue, so mighty Ravana killed him easily. Rama cremated Jatayu and thus he has attained heavenly bliss.

"Rama then contracted friendship with my uncle Sugriva and has conferred the kingdom on Sugriva after slaying Vali. We have been engaged by Sugriva. We have searched through different parts of Dandaka, but could not find out Janaki, as one does not find the glow of the sun at night. We then unwittingly entered the spacious tunnel made by Maya. Our appointed time

has expired within that tunnel. We are Sugriva's servants. Finding that the allotted time is over we are starving ourselves to death out of Sugriva's fear. Where shall we be safe after provoking the wrath of Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva ?"

Then Sampati replied with tears, "The one about whose death at the hands of Ravana you have just now spoken was my younger brother, Jatayu. I have grown old and lost my wings, so I have patiently borne the news of my brother's death To speak the truth, I have not strength enough to retaliate my brother's death. Formerly, myself and Jatayu went to heaven soaring through the sky to conquer Indra after his victory over Vritrasura. When we approached the sun, Jatayu was unnerved by the intense heat of the sun, and I, from brotherly love, protected him under the shadow of my wings. My wings were burnt and I dropped down upon the Vindhya. Since then I have been living here, and have not heard anything about Jatayu till now."

Then Angada said, "O king of the birds! If Jatayu be your brother and if you have heard all and if Ravana's residence is not unknown to you, then tell me where does that cunning Rakshasa live, whether near or far off ?"

Then Sampati, to the delight of the Vanaras, said. "You see, I have grown old and have lost my wings, still I shall help Rama with my words. The heaven, the earth and the nether region are not unknown to me. I know of the war between the gods and the Asuras and

also of the churning of the Ocean. I am infirm with age or I would have done service to Rama. O Vanaras! I have once seen wicked Ravana carrying a beautiful young damsel. That woman was trembling and weeping by taking the names of Rama and Lakshmana and throwing down her ornaments one by one. She looked like the dawn glittering over the mountain peak! Her yellow robe against the dark body of Ravana shone like lightning under the sky. She was uttering Rama's name Now I infer her to be Sita.

"The island of Lanka is the place of residence of that villain. He is the son of Viswasrava and brother of Kuvera. An island will be seen about a hundred Yojanas across the sea. The heavenly mechanic Visvakarma hath built his palace. Its gates and diases are made of gold, and the palace and its walls are of red hue. Sita is now confined there. She is guarded by Rakshasa women. You will find her on going there. Lanka is girt by the sea on all sides. Now, cross the ocean without delay. I predict through my intuition that you will come across Lanka. Journey along the sky firstly belongs to the pigeons and the Finga birds ; secondly, to the parrots and crows ; thirdly, to the Bhasas, Kuvaras and Kraunchas ; fourthly, to the hawks ; fifthly, to the vultures ; sixthly, to the proud ducks and then to the sons of Vinata. We are descended from the son of Vinata. We possess extraordinary powers. However Ravana has committed a wicked deed, and what I tell you would come to pass. I have got supernatural vision on account of the Sauparna[1] powers, and I can see

1 Clairvoyance.

Ravana and Sita from here. We are naturally endowed with a long sight. Now devise some means to cross the ocean and take me to the sea shore. I shall perform watery rites for Jatayu."

The Vanaras were mightily pleased at this news of Janaki. They took Sampati to the beach and then brought him back to the Vindhya hill. Vanaras made great noise in delight. Then Jamvuvan rising from the dust asked, "O king of the birds! Just tell us everything about Janaki and save the Vanaras."

Then Sampati finding the Vanaras ready to break their fast and eager to know about Janaki said, "O Vanaras! I shall tell you how I came to know about the abduction of Sita, and from whom; I have been living in this hill from a long time and have grown old. I have got a son named Suparshwa. He feeds me in due time. Lasciviousness of the Gandharvas, anger of the serpents, timidity of the deer and our hunger are most prominent.

"Once Suparshwa went out in the morning in quest of food, but came back without anything in the evening. I was restless with hunger and told him many hard things. Then to pacify me, Suparshwa, said, "O father! To-day in due time I soared into the sky for food and waited by obstructing the passage of the Mahendra hill. Various sea-animals were passing through it. There I saw a dark man of collyrium hue carrying away a damsel, glittering as the resplendent dawn. I thought to capture the both for meal. But that man approached me and with great entreaties begged for passage. Not

to speak of me, even the lowest of creatures forgives him who asks for protection. I gave him passage and in great speed he hied along the sky. Then the Siddhas and other rangers of the sky appeared and congratulated me on my good luck that I was alive. On enquiry, I learnt that the man was Ravana, the Rakshasa chief, and the woman was Rama's wife Janaki. She was crying in distress. This is why I am late. O Vanaras! I did not want to display my valour even hearing this from Suparshwa How could I without wings? I have only power of speech and intelligence, and I shall achieve my end by these with the help of your valour. You are unconquerable even by the gods. You have come a long distance at the command of Sugriva. Now get yourselves ready for performing the real work of Rama. Don't delay, nor be indifferent."

CHAPTER XL

NISHAKARA'S PROPHECY

When Sampati after bath and Tarpana was seated, surrounded by the Vanaras, he suddenly remembered an incident and began to narrate in delight, "Hear me, O Vanaras! How I came to know of Janaki." Formerly being scorched by the sun I fell down unconscious and I regained my consciousness after six days. I looked around to ascertain the place where I fell and seeing rivers, lakes, hills and the sea I ascertained that I fell on the Vindhya hill, on the shore of the southern sea.[1] On the hill formerly stood a sacred asylum. I lived

1 It can't be the present Vindhya mountain.

there for eight thousand years, even after whose death. Somehow I got down from the hill and with very great difficulty reached the ground, strewn with Kusha grass. At that time I felt a great desire to see sage Nishakara, and with great difficulty I reached his hermitage Formerly, I had been many a time there with Jatayu to worship the saint's feet. When I reached there, a gentle breeze was blowing shaking the trees of the hermitage laden with flowers and fruits. I waited for the sage under the shadow of a tree. After a while, I found the resplendent sage coming facing the north, after a dip in the sea. As supplicants surround a man of charity, so he was surrounded by lions, tigers, bears, reptiles and Srimaras Nishakara then arrived at the hermitage and as ministers and soldiers go back when the king enters his room, so those wild animals at once retired. Then I saw that gentle sage. He was greatly delighted at my sight and after entering his hermitage he immediately came out again and said, 'O Bird, I cannot recognise you properly at first since your wings have been burnt and your feathers have undergone a change I knew two birds of great speed, they were the kings of birds. Of that two you seem to be Sampati and your younger brother I think, is Jatayu You always came here in human form to greet me. Now tell me why you have been thus punished, and how your wings have been scorched.'

"Then I replied to the sage, 'My Lord! I have sores all over my body. I feel ashamed and I am greatly fatigued too. It is not possible to speak everything now.

Hear me, however Formerly, myself and Jatayu soared up in pride to conquer Indra in heaven. When the forest appeared like grass, the rivers like threads, and mighty mountains like the Himalayas, the Vindhya and the Meru like an elephant immersed in a pond, we were dazed by the glare of the sun. We lost our way. With very great difficulty we bowed to the Sun. The sun is large like the earth. As soon as Jatayu looked at the glowing disc he fell down even before he could speak to me. Instantly, I descended and protected him with my wings. Then Jatayu was saved from the intense heat of the sun, but my wings were burnt. I fell down like an inert mass on the Vindhya hill and Jatayu, I presume, on Janasthan. O sage ! I have lost my kingdom and my brother, so I have come to cast off my life here by throwing myself from the hill.'

"Saying this, O Vanaras ! I began to cry in grief. Then the sage after a moment's reflection said, 'Both wings and feathers will again grow, you will regain your power of vision and bodily strength. I have heard of it and have also come to know of it from my yogic powers that a great thing will happen in future. In the line of the Ikshwaku, a son name Rama will be born to king Dasaratha. That truthful hero by the mandate of his father will be exiled into forest with his brother Lakshmana. Ravana, the unconquerable Rakshasa chief, will carry off his wife from Janasthan and hold out various sorts of temptations before her, but that famous lady will ever fast for her deep sorrows. Indra coming to know of this will send her heavenly food. Knowing

that it has been sent by Indra she will partake of a little from it and will drop the rest on the ground saying that whether her husband and his brother are alive or not this food is meant for them. Subsequently, the Vanara emissaries of Rama will arrive here and, O thou foremost among birds, thou shouldst give them information about Janaki. So do not leave this place at any time More over, where will you go in your present state ? Wait, your wings will surely grow on you. I could have restored them even this day, but since by staying here you will be able to do good to the Brahmanas, saints, Indra, preceptors and to the people at large I refrain from doing it '

"O Vanaras, saying this the sage Nishakara entered his hermitage. Now, I wish to see Rama and Lakshmana. I have no desire to live long, but to breathe my last after seeing them once.

"O Vanaras ! I was thus waiting for you. To speak the truth, eight thousand years have elapsed since I have been waiting for this opportunity. After the sage repaired to heaven doubts filled my heart. I greatly despaired on account of my unfavourable circumstances and sometimes even thought of putting an end to my life But the sage's counsel to keep up my life sustained me and has dispelled my sorrows, as a lamp dispels the darkness of night. I know about the prowess of Ravana and I took my son Suparshwa to task for not rescuing Janaki at that time.[1] I have heard from the Siddhas

1 An unnecessary repetition, all these useless diffusions are interpolations of a later age by minor poets. Translator

that Rama and Lakshmana have lost Janaki and I have myself seen Janaki crying when being carried away. But my son did not do what was his duty to do towards the sons of Dasaratha."

When Sampati was narrating these things to the Vanaras, wings grew on him. Finding him thus fledged with red feather, he became extremely delighted and addressing the Vanaras said, "O Vanaras, just see, by the blessing of the sage I have got back my feathers and I feel myself as strong as I was in my youthful days. Persist in your endeavours, you will surely find Sita. The growth of my wings presages success."

Saying this the king of the birds soared into the sky just to try the strength of his wings.

The Vanaras were extremely delighted at these words of Sampati, and they swiftly proceeded in quest of Janaki towards the south where resided the hero to be conquered.

CHAPTER XLI

ANGADA'S COUNSEL

The Vanaras shortly reached the sea. They found the sky with its stars and planets mirrored on its surface. They took their quarters on its north. They beheld the ocean boundless as the sky; at one place it was agitated by mountainous billows, at another place it seemed to be gently swimming while in another place it appeared to be asleep. They stood stupefied at the sight of the mighty ocean.

Then Angada encouraged them saying, "O Kapis! Don't be depressed. Sadness is miserable As an infuriated snake destroys a child, so grief destroys everything in life. He who becomes dejected with grief at the time when he should give proof of his valour, his manliness vanishes "

Next day, Angada held consultations with the eldest Vanaras about the means of crossing the ocean He was then surrounded by the Vanara hosts, and none but Angada and Hanuman could keep them silent. Angada then greeting everybody, with due honour. said, "Soldiers, and the aged Vanaras! Tell who amongst you will cross this ocean extending over hundred yojanas? Who will fulfil Sugriva's pledge? Who will deliver us from fear? For whose service we shall again meet our wives and children and shall be able to return to Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva in cheerful minds? If any amongst you can cross the ocean, he should immediately come forward and give us his assurance."

The Vanaras remained silent at these words of Angada and the whole host stood motionless as inert objects. Angada at this resumed, "You are born of noble families, you are honourable and heroic. Nothing can thwart your course. Now tell me who can cross the sea."

Hearing Angada's speeeh the foremost of the Vanaras began to speak about personal capacities. Gaya said, "I can travel ten yojanas." Gavaksha said, "I can

leap[1] twenty yojanas." Sharva said, "Thirty yojanas are enough for me." Rishabha said, "I can cover forty yojanas at ease." Yojanadi said, "I can venture up to seventy yojanas," and Sushena gave out that he could up to eighty yojanas.

Then old Jambuvan addressing all respectfully submitted, "Formerly we could travel a good deal, but now we have grown old. Still I shan't be able to neglect my present duties Even now I can cover ninety yojanas, but don't fancy that is my utmost limit. In the days of yore, at the sacrifice of Vali, Lord Vishnu covered the three worlds. I circumambulated him at that time. But now I have grown old. I had great strength in my youth, but at present I can proceed up to that distance but that will not serve our end."

Then the wise Angada after showing proper respect to Jambuvan said, "O hero, I can cross this hundred yojanas, but I doubt very much whether I shall be able to return or not."

Then Jambuvan said, "O prince! We know that you have extraordinary power of locomotion. You can easily go hundreds and thousands of yojanas, but it is not proper for you to go personally. It is the master that should give orders, but who can command the

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1 There is considerable doubt about the true significance of the word *leap*. To take the word in its literal sense is to acknowledge a physical impossiblity as a true fact. Every student of ancient classics knows that it is not safe to interpret everything literally. There is much allegorical in it. Hence I have purposely used the word 'travel'.

master. You are our master and we are your servants. The master is to be protected like wife even by arms. Such is the immemorial custom from generation to generation. You are at the root of our adventure. Those who are adept in work, preserve the main-spring of their action ; then success follows as a matter of course My boy, you are our lord, the son of our former master. We shall muster round you."

Then Angada replied, "If I do not go and if nobody else comes forward, then we should starve ourselves to death. If we do not carry out Sugriva's command, none will be safe. He can be mightily pleased as well as greatly angry. If we return unsuccessful, we shall surely meet with death at his hands. However, just devise some means from your experience for crossing the ocean."

Thereupon, Jambuvan said, "Angada ! This will not lower the reputation of your prowess and valour. I shall now speak of him, from whose prowess we shall achieve our end. I shall now employ him in that undertaking."

Then Jambuvan addressing the cast-down Vanara host said to Hanuman versed in all Shastras, "O chief of the Kapis, why are you silent ? Why have you not uttered a single word in this present discussion ? In accomplishment you are like Sugriva, and in valour and might like Rama and Lakshmana. Like Garuda amongst the birds you are the foremost among the Vanaras. I have seen many a time that mighty bird capturing huge sea-serpents from the ocean. Your hands are as strong as his wings. In intelligence,

strength and courage you are above the rest. Tell me then why you are indifferent now.

"O hero! Just listen to a tale of old which I am now narrating to you. Once there was a beautiful nymph named Punjikasthala. She was also known as Anjana. She was wife of the Kapi-chief Keshari and daughter of Kunjara. Spotless Anjana was famous for her beauty in the three worlds, and there was none like her on the earth. On account of a curse she was born as a Vanara woman, but having heavenly virtues innate in her, she could assume any form at her will.

"Once Anjana, with her youth and beauty, was strolling about over the green hills. She was adorned with fine ornaments clad in yellow robes with pink borders and wore an excellent garland on her neck. The Wind-god gently wafted[1] the garment of large-eyed Anjana and thus her plump thighs, slim waist, heavy hips and stout breasts became exposed. He was charmed by her beauty and embraced her amorously. The chaste Anjana was alarmed by this and nervously asked who was thus violating her.

"Thereupon, the Wind-god replied, 'Ah, my beauty! Don't be afraid. I am doing you no harm. By embracing you, I am entering your body only in thought. Now, you will bear in your womb a strong and intelligent boy, and he will possess power of locomotion like me.'

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1 In the original the word means 'stole', i.e, removed but I have preferred "wafted".

"O hero! Anjana was pleased at these words and she delivered you in a cave. As soon as you were born, seeing the sun rising in the sky you took him to be an edible thing and soared into the sky. At that time, you sprang up three hundred Yojanas, yet you were not discomfited by the heat of the sun. The king of the gods seeing you thus proceeding in great speed along the sky became highly enraged and hurled his thunder at you. Being struck by it you fell down on a rock and your left jaw was broken. Since then you have been named as Hanuman.

"Thereupon, the Wind-god seeing you thus defeated grew sullen and ceased to blow. At this people of the three worlds got frightened and the gods endeavoured to please the Wind-god. Brahma said, 'This son of the Wind-god on account of my blessing won't be destroyed by arms.' Indra too was glad finding him to have survived the blow of thunder, and he blessed him saying, 'For my blessing the son of the Wind-god will die only at his will.'

"O hero! Thou art the son of Keshari by his wife, but hast sprung from the loins of the Wind-god. You are spirited and mighty and nothing can thwart your course. We are in despair of our lives, just save us all. You are skilful and accomplished. Rise up and cross the ocean. Look, the Vanara hosts are cast down. Prove your valour. Why are you sitting idle?"

Thereupon, to the delight of the Vanaras heroic Hanuman assumed a form fit for crossing the ocean. The Vanaras were greatly astonished at this, as in old

days the people were struck with wonder seeing Vamana[1] covering the three worlds. Hanuman expanded with vigour by brandishing his tail. The Vanaras began to praise him greatly and roared in joy. Hanuman expanded like a lion in his den and shone like a column of smokeless fire. Then rising suddenly from the Vanaras, after greeting the aged with due honours he said, "I, the son of the Wind-god, can uproot rocks and can always travel along the sky Nowhere my course is resisted. I shall wheel round thousand times the Sumeru kissing the heaven and shall lash the sea with my two arms and thus shall deluge the rivers, hills and lakes You will see the sea heaving up with crocodiles and sharks by the force of my legs and thighs[2] I shall wheel round like Garuda in the sky for a thousand time. I shall approach the sun before he travels from the Udayagiri to the Astagiri and shall fly back again without landing on the ground I shall overstep the stars and planets. By the velocity of my speed flowers from shrubs and plants will follow my route, and my path being strewn with flowers will look like the milky way in the sky. Everybody will notice when I shoot up or drop down. I am huge as the Mahameru hill and everybody will see steering my course through the cloud. I shall immediately spread out in the voidness

1 Vamana is evidently the sun, covering the three worlds with its three positions in the sky—viz., in the morning, in the noon and in the evening.

2 Apparently it refers to swimming. Like the non-stoppage flight of an aeroplane.

of the sky like the lightning in a cloud. Vanaras, be assured, I can apprehend and infer that I shall find out Janaki. I can travel even thousands of *yojanas* and you will find me returning with nectar either from the possession of Indra or Brahma or with the ruins of Lanka."

When Hanuman was uttering these words, the Vanaras gazed at him with delight with their eyes expanded in deep amazement.

Then Jambuvan hearing those encouraging words said, "My boy ! You have removed all our sorrows, and let the Vanaras who wish you good, perform acts tending to your well-being. May you cross the ocean with blessings of the saints and with our prayers. So long as you don't return we shall stand here on our foot. You see our lives depend upon your return."

Then mighty Hanuman replied, "O Vanaras ! There lies the Mahendra hill at a short distance. It is strong and tinged with various mineral dyes. It will bear the momentum of my speed."

Saying this Hanuman began to range about the hill, from its peak, full of trees, creepers, birds and beasts. Being hurt by his arms, the Mahendra began to groan as an elephant when attacked by a lion. Everywhere the beasts and birds startled with fear and rocks began to tremble and fall.

Gandharva couples, addicted to drink, and the Vidyadharas left the place. The birds took to their wings and the snakes entered their holes, and some with their half-emerged bodies and panting breath, appeared like streaming pinions of the hill. Even the hermits ran into deep forests out of fear.

In the meantime, the heroic Hanuman just to muster his energy began to think of Lanka in his mind.

END OF KISHKINDHYA KANDAM

SUNDARA KANDAM

CHAPTER I

HANUMAN'S LEAP

Hanuman then resolved to travel through the air in quest of Janaki. In order to perform that arduous task he raised his head and stiffened his neck quite erect, for which he looked like a bull. He then walked over the earth, green with grass, with irresistible steps. At that time, he brushed aside all animals like a lion and crushed down many trees, and thereby scared away the feathered denizens of the forest. There were various minerals on the Mahendra hill shining in their pristine lustre. Hanuman standing at its foot looked like an elephant immersed in a lake!

After this, he bowed down to the Sun, Indra, Svayambhu, Wind-god, and all beings with joined palms and then facing the west he saluted his father and then began to increase in dimension like the sea. The Vanaras at this stared at him with their eyes wide open in deep amazement. The mighty hero got ready for crossing the ocean. He caught hold tightly of the mountain with his hands and feet. The hill at once shook and flowers began to drop down from the trees. Hanuman began to press the mountain more and more, and it began to spurt forth water like an elephant shedding its temporal sweat, and the golden, silvery and collyrium hues of the different minerals were all destroyed by that torrent of water. Heavy boulders rolled down with large blocks of red-arsenic; then the hill looked like the smoke of a burning flame. Beasts and birds shrieked in

fear and ran in every direction and the snakes raising their spacious hoods began to bite at the rocks, as if they vomited fire in anger. Big rocks bit by those snakes crumbled into pieces and those fragments began to burn with fire-like venom. Although there were many medical herbs, they could not neutralise that poison.

At this sudden convulsion, the hermits thought that they were being riven by the Rakshasas. The Vidyadharas with their women ran away from their drinking haunts, leaving their golden seats, goblets, bowls, delicious articles for chewing, various kinds of meat, oxen, hides and swords with golden hilts. Fair damsels wearing necklaces, bracelets, anklets and carnation garlands, besmeared with red sandal paste and with their eyes red with wine dallying in amorous sports being startled by this strange occurrence, with their lovers, rose in the sky and watched the thing with delightful curiosity from above. The hermits thought about the great feat of Hanuman, undertaken for the benefit of Rama and Vanaras in general, and blessed that he would be able to cross the ocean easily.

Hearing this from the hermits, the Vidyadharas were struck with wonder and they repeatedly looked at Hanuman. Meanwhile the fire-like mighty hero trembled in his limbs and his hairs stood on their ends, and he roared like the rumbling of a cloud. He lashed his roundish tail covered with down again and again on his back just to get ready for the spring. It seemed as if Garuda, the king of the birds, was flying off with a huge snake.

He then firmly planted his arms like bolts on the mountain; then contracting his legs, neck and abdomen mustered his strength. He looked up and suspended his breath and then contracting his ears in order to spring, addressing other Vanaras, said, "I shall reach Lanka with the velocity of wind, just like an arrow shot by Rama and if I do not find Janaki there I shall, at the same speed, go to the region of the gods. If I do not meet with success even there, then I shall uproot Lanka and bring Ravana in bondage."

With these words Hanuman sprang at ease like Garuda. As he flew up, trees were uprooted from all sides. Hanuman coursed through the sky along with *those trees, borne up by the violence of his flight.* The Sala and palm trees went after him for a short time as people follow their friends bound for a distant land, or as the troops follow their king. Hanuman thus being covered with buds and blossoms looked like a hill lit up with glow-worms. Then the heavy trees being deprived of their flowers by the velocity of the flight began to drop down into the sea like mountains in fear of their wings being clipped by Indra,[1] and the flowers on account of their lightness gradually reached the sea. Then the surface of the sea being covered with those fragrant flowers looked like the star-spangled sky or like a cloud flashing with lightning Hanuman with out-

1 It is said that formerly the mountains had wings and they could move wherever they wished. In Milton's Paradise Lost also we find that mountains at first possessed power of locomotion.

stretched hands under the sky looked like a penta-hooded snake from a mountain crevice. It seemed, as if, the hero was going to devour both the ocean and the sky. His brown eyes, flashing like lightning, looked like two fires burning on the hill, and they resembled the sun and the moon fixed in a vast yellow aureola. His ruddy face with red nose looked like the crimson sun of the evening. The uplifted tail of Hanuman looked beautiful like the upraised standard of Indra. Being encircled by his own tail he appeared like the sun placed in the midst of the Zodiac. His red waist looked like the middle of a hill tinged with red minerals. The wind shut up within his arm-pits rumbled like clouds. Hanuman with his long tail looked like a comet[1] that issuing from the north shines like a luminous line in the sky. His shadow fell on the sea and he steered through the air like a ship Huge billows rose over that part of the sea over which he passed, and he steered through with great speed breasting the mighty waves with his wide breast hard as a rock.[2] The wind, raised

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1 In the original it is meteor, but the description tallies only with a comet.

2 Please mark this line, it means Hanuman swam across to Lanka Swimming across the English Channel has become a possible feat. Now, if Ceylon be Lanka, its distance from the main land of India at that time might have been even less than that between Calais and Dover. There is confusion of metaphors and similes, two distinct facts, flying and swimming, having been interwoven here. Of course we should make allowance for poetical hyperboles.

by his breath and by the clouds, agitated the rolling deep greatly. Hanuman pushed forward by dividing the high waves raised by his velocity as if separating the earth from heaven. At that time it seemed as if he was engaged in courting the mountainous waves like the Meru and the Mandara and the waves lashed up by his speed reached the sky where they looked over-spreading the sky like the autumnal clouds

Then all aquatic animals became visible like the body of a person when the cloth is taken off. The snakes were afraid seeing Hanuman going along the sky, like Garuda, and they were seized with fear. The shadow of this hero was ten *yojanas* wide and thirty *yojanas* long. The shadow followed him and it spread over the sea like a mass of cloud. He steered in the void like a winged mountain. The clouds began to rain in torrents over the sea being disturbed by his motion. The mighty hero flew sometimes like Garuda and sometimes like the wind through bands of variegated clouds. In the course of his journey sometimes he became concealed behind a mass of clouds and then immediately emerged from them like the full moon.

The gods and the Gandharvas then began to shower flowers on him for his astonishing feat. The sun lessened its heat and the wind began to blow gently. The Nagas, Yakshas and the Rakshasas began to sing his praise seeing him thus unexhausted.

In the meantime the Ocean out of honour to the Ikshwaku line, thought, "If I do not help Hanuman, the chief of the Kapis, people will speak ill of me. Sagara,

the Ikshwaku king, has widened my expanse. This hero is a great friend to that Ikshwaku family. It is my duty to devise some means so that this hero may take some rest and traverse the rest of the journey at ease."

Arguing thus, addressing the golden Mainaka; the Ocean said, "Indra has placed you as a bar to prevent the ingress and egress of the Asuras from the nether region. You are endowed with wonderful powers and you can expand yourself at will. Rise up at once from the sea. Look, Hanuman for Rama's work is nearing you along the sky He is fatigued. So get up soon."

Instantly, the Mainaka hill rose from beneath, it seemed as if the sun rose bursting asunder the veil of clouds. At that time the sky and the steel-like sea turned into golden hue with its lustre.

Hanuman thus finding the Mainaka rising suddenly from the saltish sea considered it as an impediment in his path. He brushed it aside by his breast as the wind disperses the clouds. At this Mainaka was immensely pleased and assuming the form of a man came to his peak and said, "O chief of the Kapis! You are engaged in a very difficult task. So please take a little rest on my cliff. Descendants of Raghu have contributed to the increase of the Ocean and you are bent upon Rama's good; so the Ocean-god shows you hospitality. It is the time-honoured custom to do good in return to the benefit one receives. He has told me that you are to cover hundred *Yojanas*; so he has asked me to rise up for your rest. There is plenty of palatable fruit and roots; partake of them at your will. You are the chief of the

Kapis and I have some connection with you, but not to speak of you, it is one's duty to entertain even an humble guest. Your speed is like that of your father, the Wind-god. Now listen to me why you are an object of my honour.

"In the golden age, the mountains had their wings They flew about in great speed, and the gods and the Maharshis became afraid of them, lest they might fall on them. Then Indra began to clip their wings in anger and he appeared before me in rage. At that time, your father carried me along the sky and then dropped me into the sea. My wings were saved by him. This is why I am honouring you Time has come to requite that good service. I have been immensely pleased at your sight. So accept my offerings and take a little rest."

Then Hanuman replied, "Mainaka, enough hospitality has been shown by these words Don't be sorry, pressing duties wait upon me and the day too is about to decline. Moreover, it is my solemn determination not to take any rest within hundred *Yojanas*, so let me go."

Saying this, Hanuman went on with unabated speed, only after touching the Mainaka Both the hill and the sea stared in wonder at him.

Hanuman then rose into the sky and proceeded along his journey. All admired his heroic feat. In the meantime, Indra was pleased at the conduct of Mainaka and addressing him said, "This hero is going for Rama's work and since you have honoured him I have been pleased with your action, go wherever you like."

Mainaka was delighted seeing Indra thus pleased, so

he sank back under the water after getting the boon from Indra.

Then the Suras, Siddhyas, Maharshis and the Gandharvas addressing Surasa, the spirited mother of the Nagas, said, "O Goddess! Look there, auspicious Hanuman is crossing the sea. Just assume the form of a dreadful Rakshasi and put some obstacles in his path. We want to test his valour. We shall see whether he can conquer you or becomes paralysed with fear."

Thereupon, Surasa assuming the hideous form of a Rakshasi, obstructing Hanuman's passage said, "Gods have ordained you as my fare, so I shall devour you today. So enter into the cavity of my mouth."

With these words she stood up before Hanuman with her mouth gaping wide

Then Hanuman said, "Rama, the son of Dasaratha, has come to the Dandaka forest with his brother and wife. There he incurred great hostility with the Rakshasas When he was absent, Ravana stole his wife. I have been sent as an envoy to honourable Janaki The earth belongs to Rama and you live within it, so it is your duty to help him. However, I swear to come back to you after giving information of Janaki to Rama."

Then Surasa, eager to test his valour, said, "Formerly Prajapati Brahma[1] granted me this boon that

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1 Almost all the Rakshasas got their boons, which were often injurious to the people at large, mostly from the Aryan god Brahma. It is really perplexing It proves at least one thing that both the Rakshasas (Non-Aryans) and men (the Aryans) had one religion and they worshipped the same gods and goddesses and the gods themselves made no distinction between the two.

whoever shall come near me I shall devour him. Now, if you have power, you may come out of my jaws." At this Hanuman was highly enraged and said, "O Rakshasi, then open your mouth in proportion to my size." Saying this Hanuman expanded his body to ten *yojanas*, Surasa gaped her mouth twenty *yojanas*. That hideous mouth looked like the abyss of hell. Hanuman then extended his body to thirty *yojanas* and Surasa her mouth to forty *yojanas*, then Hanuman to fifty *yojanas* and Surasa to sixty, then Hanuman to seventy and Surasa to eighty, thereupon Hanuman to ninety and Surasa to a hundred.

Then Hanuman suddenly contracting his body like a cloud entered into Surasa's mouth and instantly came out of it and rising into the sky said, "Dakshayani! I have come out of your mouth, I bow down to you. Now I go for Janaki."

Then Naga-mother Surasa seeing Hanuman coming out of her mouth like the moon from the jaws of Rahu, assumed her own form and contentedly said, "Go wherever you like and endeavour to find out Janaki."

At this the rangers of the sky praised Hanuman greatly. Hanuman proceeded along the sky. The limitless sky spread to limitless distance It was tempered by clouds. Birds were flying in it. The rainbow adorned it. And Gandharvas, the masters of music and dancing were roving about. Wonderful chariots drawn by lions and tigers were plying through it. It was the abode of the pious. There sacred fire carrying clarified butter (in the sacrifice) was always burning. There the sun and

the moon and other heavenly bodies shone. Maharshis, Nagas and Yakshas resided there. It is the support of the universe, and is like a canopy of the living world.

In the meantime, a Rakshasi, named Sinhika, seeing Hanuman thought of him as her destined morsel. She then followed the shadow of Hanuman. At this Hanuman got startled and thought : "As the course of a sea-going vessel is stopped by the wind blowing in opposite direction, so my journey has been thwarted."

Thus thinking he looked around and found a hideous Rakshasi rising from the saltish sea. At that sight, he understood that it was the creature spoken of by Sugriva who captures living beings by their shadows.

Then Sinhika opening her mouth, as wide as the space from the nether region to the heaven, pursued Hanuman. Hanuman then tried to find out her vital spot. Hanuman at once reduced his size, entered her mouth and tore her heart into pieces with his sharp nails. Thus after cleverly destroying the Rakshasi, he emerged from her mouth like the wind. Thereupon, the denizens of the sky praised him saying, "You have destroyed the Rakshasi by your valour. May you achieve your object ! He who has patience, intelligence, keen sight and skill, like you never loses his heart in any thing.

Thus Hanuman proceeded in great speed. The other shore of the sea was near. In the course of his journey, he saw islands covered with trees, the Malaya hill, junctions of the rivers with the sea. His vast size overcast the sky as if with a cloud. He then thought

that his vast size and speed might rouse the curiosity of the Rakshasas. So he diminished his body, huge as a mountain, and resumed his former self like a *yogi* freed from all worldly delusions. It seemed then as if God Vishnu after covering the three worlds by his three steps had resumed his former self.

There was a long range of hills along the margin of the sea, abounding in Ketakas, Uddalakas and cocoanut trees. Hanuman after crossing the ocean by his valour alighted on a rocky brow of an inclined cliff. Beasts and birds were startled by it. On arriving there, he saw the city of Lanka, like the heavenly city of Amaravati.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY OF LANKA

The hero endowed with great strength did not feel fatigued even after crossing a hundred *yojanas*—sea. He was not breathing hard even after such a hard labour He stood with an unshaken body. Not to speak of hundred *yojanas*, it was possible for this hero to travel even more Then the trees began to shower flowers on his head Being covered with flowers he stood like a tree in blossoms. Another name of Lanka hill was Trikuta, and the city of the Rakshasas stood on it. Hanuman in slow paces proceeded towards it. There the tableland was covered with green grass and fragrant shrubs and the trees stood there in beautiful rows.[1] Hanuman took a middle road to Lanka. Various trees grew in the Trikuta. There were Deodars,

1 Beautiful avenues are still to be found in Ceylon.

Karnikas, Dates, Piyalas, Kutujas, Ketakas, fragrant Priyangus, Kovidaras, Kadamvas, Saptachhadas, Asanas, and Karviras Of them many were in blossoms Some were even bent down with the weight of flowers and their leaves were gently shaking in the breeze. And birds were singing sweetly on their boughs. There were many crystal lakes and tanks full of white and red lotuses ; swans and cranes were sporting amongst them. Here and there stood sporting haunts on hills with beautiful gardens attached to them Hanuman seeing all these on his way, at last, arrived at Lanka protected by Ravana. The great city was surrounded by a moat, full of lilies, and since the abduction of Sita, the rovers of the night at the command of Ravana were guarding it on all sides with bows and arrows.

It was a highly beautiful city, girt by a golden wall, with lofty white mansions and yellow[1] high ways Its gates were covered with creepers and adorned with streaming banners. The heavenly architect Viswakarma had built that city with great care. As a mountain cave is infested with snakes, so dreadful Rakshasas lived there. The city was situated on the summit of a hill, and it seemed as if it was soaring in the sky. It looked like the creation of fancy ! Arms, like Sataghnis and Sulas, were kept in different parts. Hanuman, in amazement, stared at it, as Indra looked upon Amaravati with admiration.

The hero gradually came to the northern gate of

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1 Perhaps due to sands of that hue.

the city. It was high, as if kissing the sky, and it looked like the gate of Alaka—the city of Kuvera. The houses there were so high that it seemed that, they were supporting the sky, so to say! Hanuman considering the strong defence and the prowess of the formidable enemy Ravana and also of the sea intervening, thought, "Even if the Vanaras succeed in reaching Lanka, they won't be able to conquer. It is impossible even for the gods to occupy the city without war. This city is quite impregnable. I know not what Rama will do arriving here. A treaty with the Rakshasas is out of the question, nor do I see any favourable circumstances in winning them over by gifts, or by sowing dissensions amongst them in the war. Perhaps, it will be difficult even for Sugriva, Angada, Nila and other Vanaras to reach the place. However, let me now find out whether Janaki is alive or not I shall decide the course of action after I meet her."

Hanuman then sat upon the hill and thought of the means for meeting Sita. He thought, "Lanka is surrounded by the Rakshasa soldiers, how can I enter there with my present self. The Rakshasas are quite formidable and so it is necessary to delude them for finding out Janaki. I shall, therefore, enter the city by night in invisible form."

Hanuman heaved deep sighs, finding Lanka thus inaccessible to the gods and the Asuras. He again thought, "How shall I meet Janaki in absence of the wicked Ravana? It is not proper to neglect Rama's mission, but how shall I meet her? Acts about to be crowned

with success are often marred by thoughtlessness of the agents employed for them. Even a course of action having been decided after due-deliberations, becomes frustrated for the fault of the envoys. Emissaries proud of their education or intelligence often become the cause of failure. It is now my duty to be careful about the means by which we can achieve our object and succeed in crossing the ocean. Rama desires to punish Ravana, but if the Rakshasas can detect me, that end will be frustrated. It is not possible to enter the city even in the guise of a Rakshasa. Not to speak of anything else, even the wind cannot blow here without being noticed. It is not possible to do anything in Lanka without the knowledge of the Rakshasas. If I appear in my native form I shall surely lose my life, and great obstacles will crop up for the realisation of my master's object. So I shall enter the city in a dwarfish form during the night, and I shall find out Janaki after a thorough search of every house." Thus thinking Hanuman waited for the sunset.

At last, the sun went down and the night set in. Then Hanuman diminished his body to the dimension of a cat and became wonderful to behold. He then quickly entered the beautiful Lanka in the evening. Its highways were broad and lined with palaces with golden pillars and windows with golden net-works. At one place stood seven-storied houses, at another, eight storied ones with courtyards, decorated with gold and crystal and provided here and there with golden gates of wonderful workmanship. Hanuman felt sad at the

sight of the rich city ; but his eagerness to find out Janaki cheered him up for the quest.

In the meantime, the moon drew a canopy of light over the world. The moon rose as if to render help to Hanuman. She was shining in her lily-white purity amongst the stars, and Hanuman saw the moon rising in the sky like a swan swiming in the blue waters of a lake.

CHAPTER III

THE VIEW OF LANKA

Then the intelligent hero relying on his courage entered the city at night. Lanka was situate on the high summit of the Lanka hill. There the woods were beautiful, waters were crystal clear, and the palaces white as the autumnal clouds. The sea-breeze was blowing there day and night. Big tuskers and formidable Rakshasas were roving about hither and thither. It seemed to be the capital of the nether world guarded by the formidable Uragas or snakes, rather like Amaravati, the heavenly city, dotted with clouds charged with lightning and illumined with stars and other heavenly planets. Here and there streamers were streaming in the wind with a gentle murmuring noise. Its gates were made of gold and their thresholds were inlaid with rubies, gems and other precious stones. Its flights of stairs were wrought with gems. Everything was highly neat and clean. There stood the assembly-room with its high roof.[1] It was resonant with the

1 This description in this place does not at all fit in with the subsequent description of the outskirts of the city. —Translator

flourish of trumpets and the jingling sound of ornaments. Peacocks, swans and Kraunchas were roaming about in flocks. Hanuman was mightily pleased at the sight of the city. He thought, "The Rakshasas are ever guarding it with arms ready to strike ! Nobody can enter it by force. But perhaps Kumuda, Angada, Susena and other heroes like them may enter it." Then thinking of the prowess of Rama and Lakshmana, he felt elated in his mind.

Lanka was lighted all through and there was no darkness at all. Hanuman thus proceeded seeing everything in this way.

In the meantime, guardian deity of Lanka seeing Hanuman at the gate with a hideous face and fearful eyes appeared before the Vanara and with a thundering voice asked, "Who art thou ? Why hast thou come here ? Tell the truth or I shall destroy thee immediately, the city is guarded on all sides by the rovers of the night. Thou wilt not be able to enter it in any way."

Hanuman replied, "Ah ruthless creature ! I shall certainly tell thee what thou askest. But tell me first who thou art. Why art thou standing at the gate and abusing me thus ?"

Then the deity of Lanka harshly replied, "You despicable Vanara ! I am a servant of Ravana, the Rakahasa chief, and am guarding the city. You will never succeed in entering the city by setting me at naught. I am myself the guardian deity of Lanka and to speak the truth, you will measure the ground being killed by my hand."

Then Hanuman stood firm as a rock and said, "O 'orshipful lady ! I shall see this Lanka surrounded by moat, and shall with my own eyes see its buildings, ardens and forests. I have come here out of this curiosity."

Thereupon, Lanka again harshly replied, "You ool ! Mighty Ravana protects this Lanka, so you won't e able to see it without conquering me."

Then Hanuman humbly replied, "O gentle lady ! I hall go to my own place after seeing the city of Lanka"

Seeing such importunity of Hanuman, Lanka was reatly enraged, and slapped him with great force Thereupon, Hanuman roared in anger and struck her with his left fist. Lanka was a woman ; he therefore did not give full vent to his wrath. Then the Rakshasi with a hideous grimace reeled on the ground. Hanuman was greatly pained at that sight.

Then Lanka said with submissive voice, "Be pleased, O mighty hero ! Heroes never violate the Shastra. I am the guardian deity of Lanka, and you have vanquished me by your prowess. Now I shall tell you an old story, just listen to me. Once, God Swayambhu said o me, "Rakshasi, when you will meet with defeat at he hands of a Vanara, then you should know that evil lays for the Rakshasas have come. With your advent hat time has arrived. Nothing can avert the decree of he Almighty Creator. Now, for the wicked Ravana he downfall of the Rakshasas is come. Curse has fallen upon the city. You may now freely enter the city and search for Sita everywhere."

CHAPTER IV

INSIDE THE CITY

Then Hanuman, by night, leaped over the city-w where there was no door, and from his daring fea appeared as if he planted his left foot on the crown Ravana.

The highways of Lanka were broad and strewn w flowers and Hanuman proceeded along them. The c was crowded with the lofty mansions of the Rakshas Somewhere, he heard noise of laughter and somewh blasts of trumpets. Those houses were spotlessly whi decorated with floral wreaths and built in the Padı and Swastika styles of architecture. Devices of thu der-bolts and goads were painted on them, and the spread a sheen of jewels from the windows. Hanum proceeded for the work of Rama. He was greatly d lighted by those sights. There, beautiful damsels, stric en with amour, were singing sweetly in three octav low and soft. Somewhere the jingling sounds of t anklets or of the golden zones, or the sound of foot-fal on the stairs were heard. Some were clapping the hands and were roaring in joy. In some houses, t Vedas[1] were being read, or their Mantras were chante At different places the Rakshasas were singing Ravan praise. Hanuman saw all these during his journey. H saw spies lying hidden in the groves. Some of them h their crowns shaved, while others wore matted loc

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1 Yet we are asked to believe that the Rakshasas we cannibal monsters.—Translator.

on their heads. Many were clad in calf-skin, some in cotton fabrics, while others had no clothing on them. All those Rakshasas were variously armed. All were protected with armours. They were of various colours and of various looks. They were neither very tall nor very dwarfish, neither very stout nor very lean, neither very fair nor very dark. They were beautiful and hideous ! They were dressed in various styles. Some had staffs or flags in their hands. They never shrank from anything for moral scruples. They were guards of Ravana.

At last, the hero came near the gate, and heard neighings of the horses. Well-decorated white elephants were stationed at different quarters. There were various kinds of chariots, carriages, and vehicles. The gate was set with precious jewels, and strongly guarded by the Rakshasa soldiers. It was girt by a golden wall and out of it rose the scented fume of black Aguru and Sandal.

At that time, the moon was pouring her silvery light in the sky. It was white as the lotus and the conch and was surrounded by a galaxy of stars. At that time, all forgot their sufferings and woes, the sea heaved and the earth was tinged with light. The moon looked like the Goddess of beauty when she walks over the Mandara hill, or bathes in the evening sea, or sports amongst the lotuses by day ! The moon looked like a swan in a silvery cage. The moon with her black train looked like a bull with sharp horns. She began to rain her influence under the sky ; with the advance of

these twilight-beauties the sullenness of the proud damsels was removed. Sweet sounds of lyre began to rise and the beauties slept by embracing their husbands. Ravenous beasts were out for their prey.

Hanuman saw some places rendered noisy by a drinking party. At some place people were abusing each other. At some place a warrior was swinging his arm or thumping his breast with his fist. Somewhere, a lover was caressing his lady-love by gentle strokes of his palm. Somewhere huge elephants were trumpeting. At some spots the pious people were assembled. Hanuman was mightily pleased at these sights. He found the Nishacharas,[1] sweet-speeched and theistic. Their names were sweet-sounding and pleasing to the ear. They were the foremost people of the earth. They were differently dressed and even those who were ugly among them, appeared beautiful on account of their dress. They were accomplished and pursued deeds after their qualities. Their wives were pure, generous, devoted to their husbands and fond of drink. All those women were attired in excellent apparel and in their effulgence shone like stars. They were highly bashful. Some of them were seated on the terrace, and some on the laps of their lovers. They were after the minds of their husbands, and were engaged in ministering to their needs. Some were of golden hue and some were white as the moon. Some of them were without

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1 Nishachara literally means rovers of the night, another name for the Rakshasas. Please mark the high civilisation of the Rakshasas (vide intro).

their clothes. Some were sad for the absence of their lovers and some were glad for their union The lotus-like faces of those women were beautiful as the moon, with side-long looks of love in their eyes, shaded with lovely lashes. They wore garlands of flowers and their ornaments glittered like lightning. Hanuman was greatly pleased at their sight; but amongst them, he did not find Sita, beautiful as a flowery creeper,—the virtuous Sita created from the mind of the Creator in the royal line. She was devoted to her husband and was ever thinking of Rama. That enchantress of Rama's mind used to talk in the notes of wild peacock.

She was lovely like an indistinct lunar disc, like a streak of gold covered with dust, like a golden reed broken by the wind, like a scar left by an arrow !

CHAPTER V

RAVANA'S PALACE

At last, walking on the roof of a seven-storied house Hanuman saw at a short distance the palace of Ravana. It was girt by a red glittering wall. Formidable Rakshasas were guarding the palace as the lions keep, watch over a forest. The palace was furnished at different points with doors worked with silver and ornamented with gold and had spacious rooms in it. Cars decorated with images of gold, silver and ivory, were plying with a deep rumbling noise. The palace was full of jewels furnished with costly furniture. It was peopled by vetern warriors and surrounded by

beautiful sights. There the damsels were ever dallying in amorous sports, and the jingling sounds of their ornaments resounded the palace. All the articles of royal use were heaped in the palace. Its halls were echoing like the deep rumbling sea. They were stuffed with excellent apparel and precious jewels. There the Rakshasas, on festive occasions, prepared Soma, drink for sacrifice,[1] and gods were ever worshipped there. Hanuman considered the spot as the ornament of Lanka.

He then walked over the wall and surveyed room after room, garden after garden. He then entered the residence of Prahasta, thence that of Mahaparshwa, and after that he espied into the abodes of mighty Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana, Mahodara, Virupaksha, Vidyutjihva, Vidyunmali, Vahudranstha, Sruka, Sarana, Indrajit, Jamvumali, Sumali, Rashmiketu, Surya, Satam, Dhumraksha, Sampati, Vidyurudrupa, Bhima, Ghana, Vighna, Shukanabha, Chakra, Satha, Kapata, Harshwakarna, Dranstha, Lomasva, Ydhyonmatta, Matta, Dhvajagriva, Sadi, Dijivhva, Hastinuikha, Karala, Visala, Raktaksha and of others. These Nishacharas were immensely rich and Hanuman saw their wealth. At a little distance from those was the residence of Ravana. It was ever guarded by many odd-looking Rakshasis and gigantic Rakshasas with lances, clubs, Saktis and Bhomras in their turn. There were beautiful steeds swift as the wind, and mighty elephants with

1 An absolutely Aryan custom of the Vedic time.
—Translator

temporal sweats running down their cheeks, who looked like mountain-peaks, with drizzling clouds and fountain running on them ; they were formidable as the heavenly elephant Airavata and scattered the enemy's rank by their deep rumbling sound. Troops were stationed at points of that beautiful place. At some places various tents with golden nets were pitched, glittering like the morning sun ; there were beautiful grottos and sporting enclosures. Somewhere he saw excellent groves, places of assignment and amorous dalliance by day and by night. He saw picture-galleries and artificial hillocks. The beautiful palace of Ravana looked like a peak thronged with pinions and flagstaffs, with stands for peacocks to perch upon, and full of gems and riches, and intrepid persons were engaged in protecting that vast treasure. The palace, like that of Kuvera, the lord of wealth, was replendent with the sheen of jewels and the effulgence of Ravana's energy. There were dishes beset with gems from which food was taken and bedsteads and seats were made of gold. There wine flowed in streams, and a sweet jingling noise was heard from that twinkling zones and anklets of women and from tambours. Big mansions with speacious halls crowded upon one another.

CHAPTER VI

INSIDE THE PALACE

Hanuman saw Ravana's palace with golden casements studded with gems like banks of clouds glistening

with lightning. He saw large conchs,[1] bright arms, and above all stood a beautiful tower. This faultless structure was the admiration of the Gods and the Asuras. Ravana occupied it by his own prowess. It was built with great care, as if the Danava architect Maya constructed it by his magic. There was not a more splendid mansion than this on earth. In that beautiful palace there was not a spot of incomparable beauty, as if heaven had descended on earth! It was spacious like a cloud, and lovely like a chariot drawn by the horses. It was resplendent with the shine of jewels and was in perfect keeping with the royal prowess. There the trees bent down with bunches of flowers and their pollens, were being blown about by the wind. There were dazzling beauties like lightning and there stood the famous Pushpaka Ratha of Ravana, that chariot looked like a hill tinged with mineral dyes like the star-bespangled sky, like a cloud shining with diverse colours. There in the open space, designed for accommodating seats for many, stood golden hills adorned with flowery trees, and there in that chariot white halls, tanks with lotuses and beautiful woods were seen. There were birds of games, golden reptiles, life-like horses, and birds with their wings a little bent and contracted, and flowers of jewels were engraved in that, there the elephants seemed to be restive,[2] their bodies crimsoned with lotus-

1 In ancient times on the field of battle conchs used to be blown like blasts of trumpets.

2 Please mark the workmanship of engraving and painting of that time.—Translator.

pollens and holding lotus leaves in their trunks; and somewhere the Goddess of wealth, Kamala stood upon a lotus with her lotus-like hands. Thus Ravana's palace was furnished with various furniture. It was extremely beautiful like a summer-tree with a lovely hallo, or a hill with a beautiful cave. Hanuman was simply struck with wonder at its sight. He began to range about the palace, but became extremely sad for not seeing the worshipful Sita devoted to the accomplished (but modest) Rama.

Standing there Hanuman began to gaze upon the Pushpaka Ratha[1] repeatedly. It was furnished with golden windows set with gems and adorned with beautiful images. Divine artisan Viswakarma praised it as the most beautiful object in the whole creation. This Ratha soared up in the sky and reached even the orbit of the sun. Its every part was made with care, and everything in it was most costly, and the skill of workmanship manifested in that car was not to be found even in the heavenly Rathas.

Each one of its parts had a particular virtue. It could go unobstructed wherever its riders listed to proceed. Ravana obtained it by virtue of his spiritual attainments (Tapasya). Pushpaka was swift as the wind and was inaccessible to those who had no virtuous merit, and carried only those who were famous, happy and rich. By regulating its motion it could reach any part of the sky. It was high as a cliff and had several apartments. It was borne by the spirits with their revolving and winkless eyes. The rangers of the sky that roved by night, wore ear-rings and were fond of heavy meals.

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1 Henceforth I have preferred to retain the original expression Ratha, for from its very description, it seems it would be wrong to translate it as a chariot.—Translator.

CHAPTER VII

RAVANA'S CHAMBER

Hanuman then saw Ravana's abode in that big mansion. That was divided into several chambers. It was half-a-*yojana* in breadth and one *yojana* in length. Hanuman ranged about that place in search of the large-eyed Sita. He saw the spacious abode of Ravana guarded by three-tusked elephants and mastodons with four tusks, and by the Rakshasas with upraised weapons. In some of the chambers, he saw the Rakshasa wives of Ravana and princesses procured by force. The hall seemed as calm and deep as the sea with sharks, crocodiles and whales! Steadfast splendour of the moon was for ever there! His prosperity seemed to exceed that of Kuvera, Yama and Varuna. Within the palace stood Pushpaka built by Viswakarma for Brahma. Kuvera got it from Brahma for his religious merit, Ravana procured it after vanquishing Kuvera by his might. That Ratha had golden flights of stairs, crystal windows and daises of sapphire set with precious rubies and pearls; its beautiful terrace, painted with perfumed red sandal paste, was radiant like the newly-risen sun Hanuman then got upon the Pushpaka, and being seated upon it he began to sniff delicious smell of rich viands and drinks. Hanuman's body became scented with that fragrance, and from that he inferred it to be Ravana's residence.

Hanuman then got down from the Pushpaka and entered into the bed-chamber of Ravana. It was a

superbly beautiful hall. Its flights of stairs were wrought with gems, windows were made of gold, terraces of crystal, and images of ivory stood here and there. On all sides rose stately pillars with gems ; it seemed as if the hall was like a bird with its wings spread ! Under the terrace hung a four-cornered painted canopy. It was white as a swan but cloudy with the smoke of Aguru. It was decorated with diverse leaves and flowers, like Vasistha's cow of variegated hues. Every one was delighted by its sight. One would grow healthy by its radiant shine, and it delighted the senses of Hanuman, as a mother does her child with objects of beauty, taste, etc. At the sight of that hall Hanuman was puzzled. Was it an illusion, was it heaven, or the region of Varuna ? He saw lamps burning upon the golden pillars, but robbed of their effulgence, (the glitter of gold.) like gamblers worsted in the game of dice by their cunning opponents, hence gloomy and plunged in thought. At that time, the hall was exceedingly luminous by the effulgence of Ravana and by the sheen of jewels.

There, a number of beautiful damsels, adorned with excellent garlands and attired in superb apparel and ornaments were lying on painted woollen sheets. It was past midnight, they had then ceased from their amorous sports and were buried in deep sleep under the influence of drink. The jingling sounds of their ornaments were no more to be heard, so it appeared like a field of lotuses devoid of the hissing noise of snakes. The eyes of those damsels were closed, and

sweet lotus-like smell was coming out of their mouth. Those faces bloomed like lotuses (when awake) at day and at night they appeared like lotus buds (being gathered in sleep). And at their sight Hanuman thought that the bees would ever wish for those lotus-like faces. In fact, for their beauty he then thought of their countenances to be veritable lotuses.

Ravana's bed-chamber was full of these beautiful damsels, hence the place looked like the clear blue autumnal sky strewn with stars ! Ravana, the Rakshasa chief, was always surrounded by those faultless beauties, for which he appeared like the beautiful moon encircled by a galaxy of stars. Then Hanuman seeing those royal dames thought that those stars that for the loss of their virtues had dropped from the heaven were lying in that chamber ! In short, their beauty, grace and radiance were like that of the stars. From drink and dalliance their hair was dishevelled and the jewellery lay scattered about them. Each one was buried in deep sleep. Some of the beauties had their paints off, anklets fell from some one's feet, and bracelets from the wrists of some ; some one's gold chain hung on one's sides ! Some one's pearl necklace was torn ; some one's zone had slipped, some one's cloth had fallen off from her. They were under the influence of wine and were fatigued like pack-horses from carrying burden. Some one's ear-ring was broken, while another's garland was torn. Each one looked pretty like a tender flowery creeper trampled by an elephant ! Some beauty's pear necklace, white as the moonbeam, gathered into a heap

between her two breasts, appeared like a sleeping swan. Some one's chain of lapis lazuli looked like a water-fowl while another's golden necklace looked like a Chakravaka. Those beauties looked like so many rivulets, their hips for banks, zones for ripples, and faces for golden lotuses ! Of those damsels, some bore marks of amorous dalliance on their breast and some on their tender flesh. Some one's scarf gently shaken by her breath was repeatedly screening her face, as if a pinion of gold-thread was gently waving in the breeze ; another's ear-ring was being gently tossed by her scented breath. Some one under the influence of sleep was repeatedly kissing her rival's face thinking it be that of Ravana. Every one was deeply attached to Ravana, so her rival too kissed her co-wife's lips in return under the influence of liquor, thinking it as that of Ravana. Some one converted her arm adorned with jewels into her pillow ; some one rested her head on another's breast, while a third lay upon the latter's head ; one was lying on another's lap, while a third one slept over the former's bosom. Thus all slept together leaning against one another, and with their interlocked arms they looked like a threaded garland, and it seemed as if the creepers, blossomed at the advent of the spring, being shaken by the wind got interlaced with their clusters of flowers touching on one another. Being gathered in sleep, hardly any difference was perceptible amongst them. Ravana was then buried in sleep, so the glare of the golden lamp fell full upon those sleeping beauties without fear—as if gazing on them with winkless eyes !

The daughters of royal saints, Brahmanas, Daityas, Gandharvas, and of the Rakshasas being smitten with Cupid, had come of their own accord, being enamoured of Ravana's beauty and splendour. All were high-born queens and by their beauty and attainments were great favourites of Ravana.[1]

Then Hanuman thought, "Had Rama's wife been, like these royal dames, a queen of Ravana, it would have been better of Ravana, but she is greatly devoted to Rama, and Ravana with great difficulty has carried her off by assuming a magic form."

CHAPTER VIII

RAVANA

When Hanuman was looking round the bed-chamber, his eyes fell upon a crystal dais. It was wrought with jewels and was exceedingly beautiful. In fact, there was none like it in the whole world. Upon it stood a bedstead of Sapphire, the stands (legs) of which were made of ivory inlaid with gold, and over it was spread the most costly coverlet. The bedstead was decorated with wreaths of Asoka and on one end stood an umbrella white as the moon. Everywhere artificial

1 In spite of poetical hyperboles, the question about the civilisation of the Rakshasas and the greatness of Ravana becomes more paramount. In the next chapter, there is allusion to artificial figures with mechanical contrivances that fanned Ravana with long white hairs of the tail of the cow of Tartary.—Translator.

figures with mechanical contrivances were waving their fans and Chowris. It was fragrant with diverse perfumes and with the incense of Aguru, and over it spread highly delicate soft kid skins.

Upon that bed King Ravana was asleep. His body was besmeared with sweet-scented red sandal. His colour was dark like that of a deep blue cloud. He wore bright ear-rings, cloth of gold and had various ornaments on his person. He looked like a cloud tinged with the evening rays and fraught with lightning ; it seemed as if the Mandara hill covered with flowery creepers fell upon the surface of the earth ! He was beautiful and could assume any form at his will. After ceasing from the revelries of drink he was breathing heavily like an elephant in sleep.

Seeing Ravana, the chief of Lanka, Hanuman fell back with fear. Then gently ascending the stairs Hanuman repeatedly gazed at the mighty hero numbed with wine.

The powerful Ravana was sleeping and his bed seemed to be a grand cascade, and his arms outspread like the flagstaffs of Indra. They were adorned with ornaments and were strong and firm like bolts and the trunk of an elephant. His thumbs and beautiful nails and his fingers being adorned with rings looked like a penta-headed snake. And his arms bore the marks of wounds caused by the tusks of Airavata, by the thunderbolt of Indra and by the discus of Vishnu. They were smeared with sweet-scented sandal. Those mighty arms had vanquished the Gods and the Asuras in the field of battle.

Great Ravana looked highly beautiful with those arms. His perfumed breath carrying the fragrance of Punnaga and Vakula flowers and of wine filled the rooms. His countenance was beautiful with resplendent ear-rings; and his jewelled diadem of gold slipped on one side, his mighty chest was smeared with sandal paste, and was radiant with jewel-necklace and he wore a white[1] silken cloth. At that time he appeared like an elephant immersed in the bed of the Ganges!

At that time, four golden lamps burnt in the four corners of the room, and like lightning in a mass of clouds, it rendered the dark figure of Ravana distinctly visible. His wives were lying under his feet. Their countenances were beautiful as the moon, and they wore sapphire ear-rings, diamond bracelets, and garlands of unfaded lustre. By their beauty the bed appeared like a star-bespangled sky. They were highly skilled in music and dancing; and being overcome with fatigue they were then enjoying rest in sleep. One beauty skilled in dancing slept embracing the lyre (Vina) betraying a graceful posture of dancing, as if a full-blown lotus drifted by the current was resting by the side of a craft! Some one slept with Mudduka musical instrument on her lap—like the mother sleeping with her baby; one lay with tambour, another with Panava, while a third one slept having the Dindimas both in front of her and at her back—like a woman sleeping with her husband and child. One lotus-eyed beauty lay

1 In some reading it is yellow colour.—Translator.

embracing her Vina like an amorous girl hugging her lover to her breast. Some one slept crossing her fair arms on her lovely breast, like two golden pitchers. Amongst those beauties, Hanuman saw Mandodari, the beloved queen of Ravana She was sleeping on a separate bed, adorned with ornaments and illumined the hall by the radiance of her beauty. Her colour was that of flaming gold and she was the queen of the harem. Seeing the beauty and youth of Mandodari, Hanuman took her to be Janaki. At this Hanuman's face brightened with joy, and true to the mercurial temperament of his race he danced and sang in delight, kissed his tail and swung his arms.

CHAPTER IX

HANUMAN'S REFLECTIONS

Hanuman then renouncing his apish thoughts, meditated coolly. "Janaki is extremely devoted to Rama and it is not at all likely that being separated from Rama she would indulge in food or drink or in any sort of luxury even in sleep. Luxury in dress or ornaments must be out of question in her case. Not to speak of others, she will not even crave for Indra. Rama is the best of all, there is no second to him even amongst the gods. So the lady I am now beholding must be some other woman."

Thus thinking, Hanuman for some time paced up and down over the place of dancing. The beautiful damsels slept round about the place, some tired with

singing, some with dancing, and some intoxicated with drink. Some one was explaining skilfully a piece of music; some one in dream was praising another's beauty. Different venisons, meat of deer, buffaloes and boars were there in heaps; in spacious golden dishes were kept untouched meat of cocks, peacocks, roasted deer, bacon seasoned with curd, patridges, kid flesh, well-cooked fish, and lean hare. At another place were to be found delicious drinks, salted soup with a little acid taste, at another place were heaps of fruits and roots. The place of drinking was perfumed with fragrant wreaths all round. There were seats and beds, and the whole place seemed to be ablaze even without fire. At one place garlands were heaped together, there were golden jars, crystal goblets and vases inlaid with gems. All those were full of wine distilled from sugar, honey, flowers and fruits and flavoured with aromatic powder. There were goblets whose contents had been drained to the dregs, some with their quantity left behind, some full of wine quite untouched. All those were arranged according to some custom. There were many beds left vacant. The women were sleeping clasping each other; one was asleep covering herself with another's cloth Gentle breeze was blowing by carrying the scent of sandal flowers and of sweet wines.

Hanuman ranged about the whole place, but could not find Janaki there. Hanuman became afraid of incurring sin for seeing those queens of Ravana. "It is surely unrighteous," thought he, "to see another's wife under the influence of sleep. I have never cast my eyes

since my birth on another's wife. Surely I shall be guilty of inquity for seeing Ravana addicted to others' wives. I have just now seen Ravana's wives dishevelled in sleep, but my mind has not been least stirred by it. It is mind that induces the senses either to virtue or to vice. Besides it was necessary to search for her amongst the women, so I shall not lose my righteousness. I have entered the place with a pure mind. I have seen every cornerof theharem, but could notfind Janaki anywhere."

Hanuman saw the daughters of the Gods and of the Nagas, but Janaki was not amongst them. Hanuman then left the place.

Then Hanuman thought, "I have searched different places of Lanka, but nowhere could I find the beautiful Janaki. It now appears that the devoted Sita has given up her life. She had been ever jealous for the preservation of her chastity and the wicked Ravana being disappointed for it has put her to death. Ravana's wives are tall, hideous, have spacious mouths, perhaps Janaki has died of fear at their sight. Alas! There is no means of getting her sight now. In vain have I crossed the ocean. The time for search is over, it will now be difficult for me to go back to the irritable Sugriva. All my labours have been in vain.[1] What will the old Jamvuvan and Angada say? The allotted time is over, it is better to fast to death. It is not proper to destroy one's self. But perseverance is the root of success. There is pleasure in endeavouring, so I

1 These lines contradict the foregoing descriptions about their beauty. Which of them are true?

should gather up my energy again. I have searched the drinking hall, picture gallery, flower groves, playground, rooms in the seven-storied buildings, underground cellars, religious edifices, gardens and the passages within the palace. It is now necessary for me to search those places what I have not as yet seen."

Resolving this Hanuman began to range about Lanka Sometimes he climbed up, sometimes he got down ; at times he stood, at another time he advanced only a few steps; at one time he shut one door, at another time he uplifted the latch. Thus he did not leave any spot unvisited. He searched every nook and corner. He saw hideous Rakshasis, exquisite Vidyadhari girls of faultless beauty and the daughters of the Nagas with moon-like countenances, but nowhere was Sita to be seen. Then his mind was plunged in grief, and he became anxious, thinking of the Vanaras and of crossing the sea.

CHAPTER X

HANUMAN THINKS AGAIN

Then Hanuman coming out of Ravana's palace proceeded along the city wall with great speed.

Then he mused in his mind : "I have searched every possible place, but couldn't find Janaki, yet Sampati assured me that she must be here Could that be false ? Ravana has brought her by force and she is now under his power, still it is not likely she has yielded to Ravana. It might be that when out of the fear of Rama's sharp arrows, Ravana in great haste darted towards the sky,

at that moment Sita slipped from his grasp ; or seeing the ocean from the sky she became paralysed with fear and dropped from above as she lay dangling from the car ; or probably she has breathed her last being strangled by the arms of Ravana, or Ravana has made away with her finding her firm for the preservation of her chastity ; or the wicked wives of Ravana have devoured that black-eyed beauty. Alas ! Janaki is no more Surely, that lotus-eyed dame being unable to bear the pangs of Rama's separation has given up her life brooding over the moon-like countenance of Rama. She has put an end to herself with cries on her lips, "Alack, Rama ! Alas, Lakshmana ! Alas, Ayodhya !" But if she is alive at all, she is like a caged bird weeping incessantly. It is not likely that Janaka's daughter, wife of Rama, will at all submit to Ravana. Now what shall I say to Rama whose very being seems to depend on his wife ? I shall not be able to tell him either that I have not found Janaki, or that I have seen her, or that she is dead. It will be wrong if I say anything like this, and it will be equally unjust if I hold my speech. Alas ! Into what a fix have I fallen due to my ill luck !"

Hanuman again thought, "If I return to Kiskindhya without any information about Janaki, what credit is there ? Crossing this hundred leagues of the ocean is now useless, so also is fruitless this entrance into Lanka, as well as the search among the rovers of the night. I know not what Sugriva will say when I return to Kiskindhya nor what will Rama, Lakshmana and other Vanaras speak. If I tell Rama that I could not find Janaki

anywhere then he will die at that very moment. These are highly cruel words, surely he won't survive their shock. Lakshmana is devoted to his elder brother and he too will surely die. Then Bharata on hearing this sad news will give up his life and Satrughana will follow his steps. Then the worshipful Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra being overwhelmed with grief for the death of their sons will give up their lives. Then Ruma will die in her grief for her husband. Tara is already sad on account of Vali and on the happening of this painful separation with Sugriva she will die and prince Angada on account of the death of his mother and Sugriva will put an end to his existence. Then the Vanaras being overwhelmed with grief for their master will break their heads with their fists and blows. Sugriva ruled over them with magnanimity, equity and honour. Now they will no more dwell in caves, forests and hills, but will die with their wives and children on the plains. Some will starve themselves to death, some will enter into flames, some by hanging, some by poison, and some by weapons. It seems a huge cry will be raised as soon as I shall enter Kiskindhya, so it is not at all proper for me to go now to Kiskindhya. I shall not at any cost return to Sugriva without gathering any information about Sita ; rather if I do not return to Kiskindhya, then the virtuous Rama, Lakshmana and the Vanaras will sustain their lives in hope. So let me reside here under the tree adopting the ascetic tenure of forest-life, feeding upon the fruits that will of their own accord fall upon my head and mouth. Or what is the utility of this life ?

I shall burn myself to ashes by kindling funeral pyre on the sea-shore or shall fast myself to death for deliverance out of this difficulty and after my death, jackals, dogs and ravens will feed upon my flesh, or I shall drown myself in water. Unable to find Sita, my reputation for crossing the sea is vanished for good. Suicide is a great sin. One can enjoy many good things if he preserves his life, so I shall keep my life and surely I shall benefit by it."

Then Hanuman again thought, "I shall destroy mighty Ravana. That villain has abducted Sita and thus I shall avenge myself upon the enemy, or I shall drag him over the sea and offer him to Rama as one presents an animal (for slaughter) to Pasupati. I shall search Lanka again and again till I find out Janaki. If depending on Sampati's words I bring here Rama and if he does not find Janaki then he will scorch us with the flame of his anger. So it is better to live here on frugal diet and by restraining my senses. It is not at all proper to neglect what may ultimately cost the lives of men and the Vanaras There, at a short distance, I see the Asoka woods, extensive and dense with trees. I have not yet searched that place, I shall now go to it. After bowing down to Vasu, Rudra, Aditya, Vayu and the Aswinis I shall enter the forest. I shall surely return Janaki to Rama, like the spiritual bliss of the saints."

Having thus resolved in his mind, Hanuman stood up and bowed down in his mind to Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva He then proceeded towards the Asoka forest surveying all sides carefully. He then thought:

"This forest is dense, yet clean. It is full of the Rakshasas, and is ever guarded by them. Even the wind cannot blow hard through that forest. Thus in order to avoid detection by Ravana and for the good of Rama I shall contract my size. May Gods and the Rishis crown me with success. Now let the self-born Brahma, Agni, Vayu, Indra, Varuna, Chandra, Surya, and the Aswini twins bless me with success. Let all beings and the Lord of the beings and other unspecified[1] Gods bless me with success. Alas! When I shall see that moon-like countenance of Janaki without any stain, with fine nose, white teeth, large eyes and sweet smiles? Mean, cruel and deceitful Ravana has stealthily carried off that damsel How shall I find her out?"

CHAPTER XI

THE ASOKA FOREST

Then Hanuman after a moment's meditation and thinking of Janaki jumped over the wall of the Asoka forest. He saw various trees laden with the fruits and

1 Such sentiments are often the signs of a timid mind afraid of offending an unknown God whom he might omit through his ignorance. Polytheism is apt to breed such a fear even amongst a strong and civilised people, and this reminds us of the famous passge of St. Paul (Chap 17. v. 23. The Acts). "For as I passed by and behold your devotees I found an altar with this inscription TO THE UNKNOWN GOD whom therefore ye ignorantly worship. Him I declare unto you" Hanuman was educated, so the Greeks were, but sentiment is quite alike, begotten of superstition and fear.

flowers of summer. He saw there Sala, Asoka, Champaka, Uddalaka, Nagkesara, and Mango trees, covered with diverse flowery creepers. Hanuman then leaped into the grove like a discharged arrow. The place was beautiful to see and the trees were bent down with fruit and flowers. It was resonant with the sweet notes of birds, the cries of cuckoos. Everything seemed there to be happy and gay. Hanuman in order to find out Janaki began to rouse the sleeping birds in their nests. By the flutttering of their wings they shook the branches of the trees and flowers of variegated hues began to drop. At that time Hanuman being covered with flowers looked like a hill covered with blossoms. At that sight every one took him to be God of Spring personified. And the whole forest being strewn with flowers, that fell from the trees, appeared beautiful like a well-decorated beauty. Hanuman then began to break down the trees and committed all sorts of violence thereto. Thus the woods came to be divested of fruits and flowers and looked like young beauties with their hair dishevelled, their ornamental paste wiped off, their scarlet lips showing their pearly teeth sucked of their moisture with their tender bodies scratched with nails and teeth! Hanuman in great vehemence scattered leaves and flowers as does the wind in cloudy weather. Hanuman found there beautiful pavements worked with gold and silver and beset with gems. He saw there tanks and ponds filled with crystal water and with golden flights of steps into water.

There the sands were made of pearl-ruby-dusts and

the yard was of crystal ! Golden trees stood on all sides. Lotuses were in bloom and swans were sporting amongst them. Clear streams were flowing there, and flowery groves and grottos covered with creepers stood here and there At a little distance there stood a tall cliff full of trees. There were marble-houses in different parts, and there a stream falling down from the hill looked like a damsel slipped from her lover's lap ! Its current being interrupted by the bending branches of the trees appeared like an angry woman held by her relations. At a short distance from it there was a tank and deer strayed on its beautiful banks. Beautiful gardens laden with fruits and flowers provided with golden seats and palatial buildings—all built by Viswakarma—adorned the place. At a short distance stood a Sinsapa tree of golden hue. It was full of leaves and was covered with creepers and a golden dais stood at its root. At places stood fine trees of golden hue and they looked like columns of fire, and in their lustre Hanuman thought himself made of gold like the Sumeru hill. The golden tree shaken by the breeze produced a murmuring noise like the tinkling of divine ornaments. It was covered with tender sprouts, buds and blossoms. Hanuman was greatly surprised at the sight.

Hanuman then climbed upon the Sinsapa tree and mused thus : "Perhaps, Janaki with a sad heart is roaming about hither and thither in order to get a sight of Rama. I shall see that poor helpless woman from this tree. This is the beautiful Asoka forest of the wicked Ravana. The queen of Rama must be here. She is an adept in

roaming through forests and this tract is also well-known to her and surely she will soon come here. That chaste damsel is devoted to Rama and is passing her days in sorrow. She will soon arrive here. The denizens of the forest are dear to her, and the time of vespers has also come. Surely she will come to the stream. This forest is a worthy place for her strolling. If she is alive, surely she will come to bathe in this cool stream" Thinking this, Hanuman waited for Sita and being concealed within the leaves of the tree began to survey around.

CHAPTER XII

SITA IN THE ASOKA FOREST

Being hidden in the Sinsapa tree Hanuman began to cast glances all around. The Asoka forest was adorned with the Kalpa-treee; excellent fragrance and juice were ever being emitted from there. That forest was beautified with various things, and it appeared like the Nandana garden. It was interspersed with palaces and was resounded with the sweet notes of the cuckoos and with the shrill cries of the peacocks. The tanks were filled with golden lotuses, and the whole forest shone with a ruddy glow of the Asoka flowers. All sorts of fruits and flowers were available there, and beautiful seats were erected at various places and fine blankets were spread over them. The branches of the trees were covered with the birds that lived there. They were continually flying from one branch to another branch of the tree, and thus being covered with blossoms they appeared quite charming. The branches of the Asoka

were covered with blossoms and the Karnikaras were kissing under the weight of flowers. The whole forest seemed to be ablaze with their red tint. There were Punnaga, Saptaparna, Champaka and Uddalaka trees. There were numerous Asoka trees in the forest, some were of golden hue, some were flaming like fire, and some were of deep collyrium hue. That Asoka forest was more beautiful than the Nandana garden and the Chaitraratha woods of Kuvera. It may be compared with a second sky, and the flowers there shone like planets and stars, or it might be said to be the fifth ocean with its flowers for the gems! Various kinds of sweet smell were there as in the Himalayas, or in the Gandhamadan. At a short distance, there stood a coral palace white as the Kailasa mountain, and resting on a thousand pillars. Its stairs were made of coral, and its daises of gold. There was ever bright sheen and its height reached the sky.

"The heroic Hanuman all on a sudden espied a woman lean with fasting and surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides, and she was continually heaving heavy sighs. She could be recognised with very great difficulty and by inference only ; she was spotless like the newly risen moon, like unto a flame enveloped in smoke ; she was devoid of all ornaments, she wore a single piece of dirty yellow cloth. She looked like the Goddess Lakshmi without the lotus. Racked with grief, the chaste lady looked like the star Rohini under the grip of Ketu. It seemed she was brooding over something, even thinking of some person in her mind. Tears were flowing

down her cheeks. There was not a single affectionate soul near about her, but the Rakshasis all round. At that time she appeared like a stray hind surrounded by the dogs. Her hair gathered in a single braid was hanging on her back like a huge snake. She looked pretty like the earth spotted with green vegetation after the rains !

Hanuman knew her to be Sita from the instructions he formerly received. He thought, "She looks exactly like her whom I saw being carried off by Ravana."

Janaki's face was beautiful like the full moon, her bust lovely and round. She illumined the darkness of the place by the radiance of her beauty. Her throat was of lustrous cream colour, her lips scarlet like the ripe Bimba, her waist lean, and her features superbly graceful. She was pleasing to the world like the full moon. She was seated on the ground like an ascetic woman devoted to penance and was occasionally heaving heavy sighs. Emaciated with grief her beauty waned and she looked wretched like Smriti[1] clouded with doubts, like reduced wealth, lost respect, like success attended with failures, like hope without any object of desire, like sullied intelligence or fame spoiled with false rumours. She was sad for absence of Rama and was oppressed by the tyranny of the Rakshasis. She was casting restless glances all around. Her face was dark with sorrow and bathed in tears and her black eyes and lashes were wet. She looked like the moon enveloped in deep blue clouds.

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1 Consists of Shastric rules for rituals and also for social and political conduct.—Translator,

Hanuman was greatly perplexed with her sight. Then Janaki was difficult to his comprehension like a forgotten piece of knowledge, or like words having different meanings yet not governed by any grammar. Hanuman seeing that faultless daughter of the king thus debated in his mind :

"The ornaments mentioned by Rama are on her person. I find on her ears excellent ear-rings and Trikarnas, and ornaments of coral on her arms, stained by the constant contact of her body. However these are the ornaments spoken of by Rama, and I see them all except that which she threw down on the Rishyamuka mountain. This woman formerly threw down her ornaments with a jingling sound and the Vanaras found a yellow scarf fallen from this lady attached to a tree. Janaki has been wearing this single piece of yellow cloth from a long time ; it has become stained with dirt, but it is beautiful as that scarf was made of golden texture. This golden beauty is the darling of Rama. Though now far off, yet she is still living in his mind. On account of her separation, grief, liberality and passion have alternately taken possession of Rama's mind. He felt pity for being unable to protect his wife in a critical moment ; liberality from the thought that proper treatment has not been accorded to those who have asked for his protection, and grief for the separation of his wife, and passion for his darling being distant from him. This lady is as beautiful as Rama, so she must be his spouse. There can't be any doubt about it. Her mind is fixed upon Rama so is that of Rama upon her. That is why Rama is still

alive otherwise he would not have survived a moment. It is indeed a great thing that he has not been completely swept away by grief for this lady, but somehow he has managed to maintain his mortal frame It is indeed arduous."

Hanuman was greatly delighted at the sight of Sita and praised Rama again and again in his mind, and after a minute's thought he began to lament with tearful eyes, "None can override destiny." Janaki is the wife of the elder brother of the cultured Lakshmana and is an object of his respect, but she has been smitten with sorrow. Janaki is fully aware of the prowess of Rama and Lakshmana ; she is therefore calmly waiting without restlessness like the full current of the Ganges at the advent of the rains. Her pedigree, her rank, her age is worthy of Rama, so it is only meet that they should thus be attached towards each other. For this large-eyed Janaki Vali and Kavandha have died and Rama killed Viradha. For her Khara, Dushana, Trishira, have died with fourteen thousand Rakshasas in Janasthana. For her, famous Sugriva has obtained the Vanara kingdom from Vali and it is for her that I have crossed the sea and have visited this city of Lanka. Now it seems that it would not be improper for Rama if he destroys not only the earth but the whole universe for her.[1] On the one hand that world and on

1 It is common to compare the Iliad with the Ramayana though the characters are widely divergent, but one line from Homer may be quoted here when the Trojan Senate resolved to continue the war exclaiming, "O she is

the other Janaki, but the whole world is not worth a hundredth part of Janaki. The damsel is the daughter of the royal saint Janaka, and she rose out of the earth at the time covered with ruby-like dusts of ploughing the ground for sacrifice. She is the daughter-in-law of the mighty Dasaratha, devoted wife of virtuous Rama, and she has renounced all enjoyment and endured the hardships of forest-life out of her devotion to her husband. Alas! she who for her devotion towards her husband sustained her life on fruits and roots and treated the forest as her own house is undergoing such sufferings now! As a man sorely oppressed with thirst pants for the tank, so Rama has been eager for her sight. And as a king deprived of his throne becomes delighted at the restoration of his kingdom, so he will be mightily pleased after getting her. This Janaki is now devoid of friends. Deprived of enjoyments she is sustaining her life only in the hope of getting back Rama. She is not looking to the Rakshasis, not to these flowers and fruits, but she is ever thinking of Rama in her heart. The husband enhances the beauty of a woman more than her ornaments, and now in his absence she appears lustreless. Seeing this black-haired beauty smitten with grief myself too have been greatly mortified at heart. She, who in forgiveness is like the earth, and who was protected by Rama and Lakshmana, alas, is now surrounded by the Rakshasis under the tree. Janaki is smitten with

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worth the trouble." Sita was not less fair than the famous daughters of Zeus—Translator.

grief and she appears wretched like a lotus destroyed by frost. She is like a Chakravaki bird being separated from her mate. These Asokas with their abundance of flowers are scorching her heart with grief like the rays of the blazing sun.[1]"

CHAPTER XIII

SITA IN ASOKA FOREST

Thus passed one day, and again came the night and the white moon ascended the sky, like a swan floating in the blue waters and it cast its beams as if to help Hanuman. The moon delighted Hanuman with its gentle and soothing rays. At that Janaki of moon-like countenance was immersed in grief like a craft sunk with heavy load. At a short distance from her there were a number of hideous-looking Rakshasis; some of them had only one eye, someone ear, some with large ears, some with upturned nose, some with long and thin necks, someone's hair was dishevelled ; someone was all covered with hair, as if wrapped in a blanket; some had spacious foreheads, some had long faces and protruding bellies ; some were tall, some were dwarfish, and some were hump-backed ; some had yellow eyes ; some had hideous grimaces ; some were brown ; some were black ; some were angry and some were quarrelsome. Some had lances, some were armed with clubs, and others had subtle weapons; the faces of some of

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1 Red flowers compared to the rays.—Translator.

them bore resemblances to those of tigers, jackals, deer and buffaloes. Someone had her mouth set on her breast. Someone's feet were like those of a cow, someone's like the elephant, someone's like the hoofs of the horse's hoofs, while another had of a camel; some had one leg; some had one arm; someone's ears were like asses' ears, some had the dog's ears, some like those of an elephant; some like those of a bull and someone like of those of a lion Some Rakshasi's nose was long and crooked, someone's like the trunk of an elephant while some were without noses.[1] Some Rakshasi's hair was kissing her feet, someone's hair was iron grey and rough, someone had a long protruding tongue. They always drank wine. They were extremely fond of wine, meat and blood

Hanuman saw these formidable Rakshasis. They stood surrounding the Sinsapa tree. At the bottom of the tree sat Janaki, wan with sorrow and her dusty hairs were scattered round her. She looked like a star dropped on earth on the wane of its virtue. The sight of her husband was beyond her reach, but by her devotion she had gained world reputation. Her whole body was devoid of ornaments, yet she shone in the lustre of her love for her husband There was no friend or relation by her; she was confined by Ravana in the Asoka forest and she appeared like a young elephant, astray from the herd, surrounded by the lionesses. She looked

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1 It is difficult to reconcile these descriptions with the former account of Ravana's palace.—Translator.

like the crescent of the autumnal sky covered with clouds; she was tainted with dirt like the lotus soiled with mud. She looked miserable and sad, but spirited, sustained, rather undaunted by the memory of her husband. Her chastity was protecting her all through. She cast furtive glances around her like a frightened deer, her sights seemed to scorch the trees with their leaves and flowers She looked like Sorrow's self, like a wave in the ocean of grief She looked extremely beautiful even without any decoration. Her features were developed, but lean with grief. She looked like a flowery creeper divested of the wealth of flowers. Hanuman could not restrain his tears at finding her out (at last). He again and again bowed to Rama and Lakshmana in his thought and remained concealed behind the leafy screen of the Sinsapa tree.

CHAPTER XIV

RAVANA APPROACHES SITA

It was the small hours of the night and at the end of the night Brahmins versed in the Vedas and sacrifices and conversant with the six[1] branches of the Vedas began to chant the Vedas. Sweet and auspicious music rose, and the mighty Ravana awoke from sleep. His garland was torn and his cloth was loose. After rising from the bed Ravana began to think of Janaki. His

1 Six branches are :—Grammar, prosody, astronomy, pronunciation, interpretation of uncommon terms and the rituals —Translator.

mind was fixed upon Janaki, and then it was difficult for him to control surging his amorous passion.

Then Ravana proceeded towards the Asoka forest surveying the rows of trees. There the trees were bent down with fruits and flowers and birds were singing sweetly over them. The bottom of the trees were covered with flowers dropped from the trees and deer were straying amongst them. The Rakshasa King Ravana was smitten with Cupid. As the nymphs and daughters of the Gods and the Gandharvas follow Indra, so a number of beauties followed Ravana's traces. Some of them held golden lamps in their hands; some held chowris, palmyra fans, some carried pitchers filled with sweet perfumed water, some jewelled vessels filled with wine, some white umbrella with golden staff and some circular of gold. As lightings follow the cloud, so a number of Ravana's queens followed him out of deep attachment and love. Their necklaces and garlands were a bit faded and their cosmetics gone, their hair was dishevelled, their eyes were sleepy and revolving under the influence of liquor. Beads of perspiration stood on their lotus-like faces, and their glances were quite infatuating. The passionate Ravana was slowly advancing thinking of Janaki.

Hanuman then heard the jingling sounds of the anklets and bracelets, and so Ravana also of unthinkable prowess standing at the gate of the Asoka woods A number of bright lamps fed by scented oil were before him. He was almost overwhelmed with pride, passion and wine. His eyes were red and were looking askance. He looked like Cupid himself, (though) he had no bow

and arrow in his hand. A milk-white scented scarf, perfumed with the fragrance of flowers, was slipping off from his shoulders from time to time down to his waist and Ravana adjusted it to its proper place. Hanuman then leaning against a branch of the Sinsapa tree saw Ravana slowly coming near. He became anxious to study the person. Ravana had a retinue of youthful beauties, and with them he entered the Asoka garden, a fit place for women There was a female warder named Sankukarna, intoxicated with liquor and adorned with ornaments. Hanuman saw Ravana surrounded by the beauties like the moon encircled by a galaxy of stars So long Hanuman could not recognise him. Now, he could know him to be Ravana. "He is the hero," thought he, "whom I saw sleeping in the beautiful hall." He climbed on the top of the tree, for he could then hardly bear the effulgence of Ravana. Hanuman remained concealed behind the leaves and branches of the Sinsapa tree. In the meantime, Ravana desirous of seeing Sita came near her.

Thereupon, Janaki at the sight of Ravana began to tremble with fear, like a plantain-leaf shaken by the breeze Sita then sat silent, covering her belly with her thighs, and her breasts with her hands She was overwhelmed with sufferings and grief.

On approaching, Ravana found her like a broken raft overwhelmed in the sea. She was seated on the ground, like a branch felled down by an axe. Being stained with dust particles, she looked like a lotus stained with mud. She was wan with grief, and was conti-

nually shedding tears. She only wished for Ravana's death and her mind, in her thought, flew to Rama, as if, riding on the wings of her resolution. She was devoted to Rama and she saw no limits to her sufferings At that time she looked like a snake writhing in the dust under the influence of a charm.

She was miserable like the star Rohini oppressed by the comet. She was born of a highly respectable family, but from her dress she seemed to be a low-born one. Then the princess appeared like a dying flame, like slighted respect, like disappointed hope, like a disobeyed mandate, like weak intellect, like the horizon blazing up with a sudden eruption, like worship interrupted by accidents, like a faded lotus, like an army without a leader, like the sun covered in darkness, like an altar trampled upon, and like an extinguished flame. She was dark with sorrow and looked like the full moon under the jaws of Rahu She was like a torn leaf, and wretched like a lotus without the bees. She appeared like a stream diverted and dried up having met with obstruction in its course She was in extreme distress on account of her husband's absence and looked gloomy like dark night. She was tender and graceful and was accustomed to live in jewelled rooms. She was pale like a recently plucked lotus scorched by heat. She was like a young elephant captured and tied up to a post A long braid of hair hung on her back, like the dark blue skirt of an autumnal forest. She was greatly emaciated in grief. But her beauty shone though thus neglected. Her heart was full of

misgivings and anxieties, she was in extreme distress and was praying with folded palms for Ravana's death. Her eyes were slightly red with anger and their ends were white, and she was repeatedly looking round with tearful eyes.

CHAPTER XV

RAVANA'S SPEECH

Then Ravana began to seduce Janaki with sweet words, "O my beauty, with thighs like the trunk of an elephant, you have concealed your breasts and belly at my sight, out of fear. O my large-eyed beauty, I am yearning for your love, please respect my love. In this Asoka forest there is no man or Rakshasa, so remove all fear about any other male person. It is Rakshasa's nature to ravish another's wife and to carry away another's wife by force, but since you are unwilling I have not touched your person. However much may I now be smitten by the God of love, I shall not behave otherwise. O worshipful lady, depend on me, don't be afraid, you should have regard for me and don't be overwhelmed with grief. To wear a single braid of lock, to lie on the ground, to fast, and to put on a dirty piece of linen are not worthy of you. Enjoy yourself by showing your attachment for me. Put on beautiful garlands, excellent apparel, fine jewellery and decorate yourself. Pass your time pleasantly in dancing, singing and drinking. You are a gem of a woman Don't give up all desire for decoration ; deco-

rate yourself up to your taste, and ask for my love. You must not remain unadorned in any way. The beauty of your youth is imperceptibly passing away, and once it is gone like the onward current of a river, it will never return. It seems that, the Creator of beauty after creating thee has ceased from his work ; so I do not find anything like your beauty on earth. You are young and beautiful. Even the mind of Brahma, the grandsire of creation, is stirred up by your beauty. To tell you the truth, I cannot draw away my eyes from whatever limbs of yours they might light upon. Shake off your perverseness There are many beauties in my palace,—be queen over all. I confer on you all the wealth I have secured by my prowess and my vast kingdom on earth ; live as my wife. You see there is no match for me in the three worlds. O my Goddess, just listen to the account of my prowess At one time, all Gods and Asuras combined could not withstand my prowess on the field of battle. I cut down their flag-staffs repeatedly. O my beauty, be attached to me and decorate your person. Let me once see you well-dressed. Just condescend, out of pity towards me, to things of luxury, to food and drink. There is immense wealth and vast kingdoms under me. Please distribute them as you wish. Be attached to me without any fear, and command this impertinent self. My darling, you see with your own eyes my riches, what will you do with poor Rama clad in rags ? He has lost his beauty and is now meandering in the forest. Victory in war is out of question in his case. He sleeps on the

ground and is devoted to observances of rites. I am afraid whether he is still alive or not. Even if he be living, not to speak of union, he will not have even the opportunity of seeing you. How a crane will ever have a glimpse of the moon-beam hidden behind the clouds? Hiranyakashipu got his wife from Indra, but Rama will never get you back from my hands. O my beauty, thou hast stolen my mind. I have no more attachment for my wives seeing you even clad in dirty silk, devoid of ornaments and lean with fasting. Be queen over the accomplished beauties that are in my palace. As the nymphs attend upon the Goddess of beauty, so these world-renowned beauties will wait upon your pleasure. O my beauty, with charming brows and well-developed hips, do thou enjoy all the wealth of Kuvera, the lord of the Yakshas, and the seven worlds along with me. O my Goddess, in prowess, wealth, and fame Rama is not equal to me. Be then merry and help yourself with food and drink. I shall confer on you the whole world. Do thou gratify my wishes, and your friend will be satisfied with you. O my timid lady, adorned with golden necklace, range with me in the beautiful forest skirting the shore of the sea.

CHAPTER XVI

SITA'S REPLY

Hearing these words of the haughty Ravana, Sita trembled in fear and began to shed incessant tears. Rama was uppermost in her thoughts; by placing a

blade of grass between her and Ravana she piteously began, "Don't hanker after me. Be attached to your own wives. I am as inaccessible to you, as salvation to a sinner. Touch of a third person is highly reprehensible for a devoted wife. I am born of a high family and have been married to a respectable man. How can I agree to this (proposal) ?"

Janaki then turning her back against Ravana, resumed :

"You see, I am another person's wife and am chaste. Don't take me for a common woman. Have regard for virtue and be upright. O Rakshasa, another's wife should be protected like one's own wife : and being mindful of your life be attached to your own wives. The man who is not content with his own wife, is a slave of his senses and meets with insult from another's wife, and his friends and relations too condemn his conduct. When your intelligence is so perverse, it seems there is no good man in Lanka. Or if there were any, you never cared to mix with them ; or whatever good advice they might have given you, you have neglected them thinking them to be useless, for the destruction of the Rakshasa clàn. Royal splendour soon vanishes at the hands of a vicious and foolish king. For your own fault the rich city of Lanka will soon be reduced to ruins. Even one feels glad when a wicked person meets with his end, so many will exclaim in your distress, 'Happily dissolution has overtaken the wicked.'

"Ravana, as light is to the sun, so I belong to

Rama. So do not attemt to tempt me by display of pomp and riches. Having once made the arm of that lord of men as my pillow, how can I rest my head on another's arm? Like unto that knowledge of Brahma of a devout Brahmin, I belong to that royal saint, cognisant of the higher truths of the world. It behoves you to take me to Rama If you are anxious for the splendour of Lanka, if you wish to live with your family and dependents, then make friends with Rama, ever kind to them who seek his protection. If you return me to him, then and then alone it will be good for you or great disaster is sure to follow. Thou might not be destroyed by the thunderbolt. Death might have spared you for good, but there is no escape from the hands of that prince of men. You will soon hear the deep rumbling sound of the twanging of the dreadful bow of Rama, like that of the thunderbolt. Soon, Rama's arrows engraved with his name will with great speed, fall upon Lanka. Those shafts adorned with Kanka feathers will cover this place and destroy the Rakshasas. As Vamana rescued the glory of the Gods from the grip of the Asuras, so Rama will soon rescue me from your hands. You see Janasthana has been made desolate Rakshasas have been destroyed. What you have committed is already too bad. That hero went for hunting and with that prince of men went his brother to capture deer in the forest, and thou hast stolen me away from the empty hermitage. You have committed a nefarious act And like unto a dog incapable of facing a tiger, you would have surely run away at their sight.

You will share the same fate as Vritra Asura did, who fought with one hand against Indra with two hands, and was defeated. Your wealth and resources will be of no avail when thou hast contracted enmity with Rama As it is easy for the sun to dry up a bubble of water, so it is easy for my husband to take away your life. Whether you repair to the Kailasa, or enter the nether region, there is no escape from Rama's hand, like a tree singed by the thunderbolt."

CHAPTER XVII

RAVANA'S REPLY

Ravana then replied to Janaki's harsh words, "Janaki! a man becomes dear to a woman in proportion he courts her, but you have insulted me as much as I courted you. As a cunning driver controls the wayward horse, so amour for you has checked my wrath. In fact, Love is hostile, for whatever woman it craves it creates pity and affection for her. O my beauty, you have grown unkind to me just for nothing. You are fit to be insulted, nay even to be punished with death, but love has dissuaded me from all that, though you deserve death-sentence immediately for all the harsh words you have just now spoken."

Ravana again resumed with anger, "You see, I shall wait for another two months according to the pledge, after which you will have to share my bed. If in the meantime you do not change your mind, my cooks will carve you into pieces for my breakfast."

At this, the wives of the Gods and the Gandharvas were greatly sorry and they consoled her with their silent gestures by their eyes and lips.

Then Janaki collecting herself a little began to speak, being inspired by the spirit of her devotion and by the heroism of her husband, "O, thou mean fellow, perhaps there is none in this city who wishes you good, or he would have certainly dissuaded you from such a vile deed. Like Sachi to Indra I belong to pious Rama, and none but you in the three worlds ever ventured to indulge about me even in thoughts. How will you be saved for the sinful words just uttered by you ? Rama is like a proud tusker, and you are like a hare, so you will certainly be vanquished in battle. Don't you feel ashamed to rail against Rama in his absence ? You are staring at me with lustful eyes, and these fell eyes of yours will surely fall to ground. I am Rama's wife and daughter-in-law of Dasaratha. Strange that your tongue has not yet been scorched in uttering these words to me. By the fire of my chastity I can even now reduce you into ashes, but for ascetic observances and for Rama's permission, I have not done it yet. You will never succeed in keeping me secretly, or the act of abduction secret ; what thou hast done is enough for your death Thou art Kuvera's brother and a warrior, why didst thou then first remove Rama by the magic of Maricha and then steal away his wife ?"

Then Ravana rolling his cruel eyes, looked at Sita. His body was like a mass of dark clouds, his arms were mighty, high was his neck, tongue flaming, and eyes

grim. His strength and courage were like that of a lion, and gait slow. He was adorned with a red garland and clad in a red cloth. He had gold bracelets in his arms, trembling diadem on his head, and a golden zone round his waist. With that he appeared like the Mandara Hill girdled by snakes at the time of the churning of the ocean. With his jewelled ear-rings he looked like a flaming hill adorned with the red Asokas ! He was like the Kalpa-tree, or like the spring incarnate. He looked terrible, albeit adorned like a chaitya[1] in the cremation-ground. His eyes were red with anger and he was breathing like a snake. There were angry frowns on his brow and he said casting his eyes on Janaki, "Thou art wicked, thou hast no sense of good or evil. I shall immediately destroy you, as the sun does with darkness."

Saying this, Ravana cast his glance towards the hideous Rakshasis. There stood many of them. Ravana addressing them said, "O Rakshasis, just devise means either jointly or separately so that Janaki may soon be addicted to me. Do it by good or bad conduct, by conciliation or repression, by threat or by blandishment."

Ravana repeatedly gave them these directions, and thundered at Janaki with anger and amour.

In the meantime, a Rakshasi named Dhanyamalini approached Ravana and embracing him said, "Do thou sport with me. What will you do with that wretched and pale woman ? You see, Gods have not ordained

1 A cenotaph, a monument raised on the site of funerel pyre.—Translator.

enjoyment to her luck. This woman is foolish. I am burning with desire seeing you courting her. Highest pleasure ensues from receiving a willing woman."

Thus Dhanyamalini took away Ravana by the amorous force. Ravana too refrained at once with smiles, and being surrounded by women he left the place shaking the earth by his firm treads.

CHAPTER XVIII

PERSUASIONS

After Ravana entered the palace, the Rakshasis came near Sita and began to speak harsh words in anger, "Janaki, through your stupidity you do not realise the glory of being the wife of the great Ravana born of the Pulasthya line." Then a Rakshasi named Ekajata angrily said, "You see, Pulasthya was the fourth of the six Prajapatis, the mind-born sons of Brahma. Sage Viswasrava is the mind-born son of that saint Pulasthya, and mighty Ravana is born of that Viwasrava. Be now the wife of Ravana. Why do you disbelieve my words ?"

Then a Rakshasi called Harijata rolling her cat-like brown eyes angrily, said, "Ask for the love of Ravana who has conquered Indra by his might. Why hast thou no love for that mighty hero, skilled in battle ? Emperor Ravana will attend on you, renouncing his dearest queen, Mandodari. He will come to you by discarding his jewelled chamber full of beauties."

Then another Rakshasi named Vikata said, "Look, he was by your side, who has repeatedly conquered the

Nagas, Gandharvas and the Danavas. Ah fool! Why don't you wish to be Ravana's wife?"

Then Drumukhi said, "Why do you not wish to be the wife of Ravana, the king of kings, in whose fear the sun withholds his heat, the wind does not venture to blow, and the trees shower flowers, and at whose desire even the clouds rain. Janaki! It is for your good that I am saying this. Listen to my words, or you shall die."

Then those terrible Rakshasis began to pester Sita again with unpleasant words, "O Sita, why dost thou not like to live in the beautiful palace of Ravana abounding in costly beds? You are a human being and consider it as something great to be the wife of a man. Do thou turn from Rama or your desire will never be fulfilled. Rama has lost his kingdom, he is wretched and disappointed, so turn thy mind from Rama. Ravana is enjoying all the riches of the world, do thou spend thy time happily with him, and enjoy yourself to your heart's desire."

Then Janaki with tearful eyes replied, "You have persuaded me to give myself up to another person. This sinful proposal will never find any place in my heart. How can a woman be the wife of a Rakshasa? Rather devour me,—I shall never be able to accede to your requests. My husband is Rama, whether he be poor, or devoid of kingdom, he is worshipful to me. I am ever attached to Rama, as Subarchala [1] to the sun. Like unto Sachi to Indra, Arundhati to Vasishtha, Rohini to the

1 Sun's wife—Translator.

Moon, Lopamudra to Agastya, Sukanya to Chyavana, Savitri to Satyavan, Sreemati to Kapila, Damayanti to Nala, I am ever devoted to Rama."

Hearing these words of Janaki, all the Rakshasis were beside themselves in rage and covered her with cruel reproaches. All along, Hanuman sat speechless on the Sinsapa tree, and he heard all their words. Janaki was trembling with fear and the Rakshasis surrounding her reproached her severely, and began to lick their lips with their fiery tongues. "Fetch the axe quickly. She is not worthy of the royal Ravana." These words they uttered repeatedly

Janaki then wiping her eyes with the end of her cloth sat at *the foot of the Sinsapa tree*. Then the Rakshasis surrounded her again. Amongst them there was a grim-looking Rakshasi, who said to Janaki, "You have shown sufficient proofs of your love for your husband. It is more than enough. Too much of it will be the cause of your miseries. I have been greatly pleased with you. May you be happy. You have done the duty of a human being. But now listen to my words. The Rakshasa chief Ravana is liberal, sweet-speeched, kind and mighty, give up your love for a puny man and be devoted to him. Put on excellent apparel and fine jewellery, be the queen over all like Sachi and Swaha.[1] What will you gain by getting the poor and weak Rama ? But if you do not follow my words, I will devour you immediately."

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1 Wife of Fire, Goddess presiding over the sacrificial offering of a Vedic deity.—Translator.

Then Vikata with hanging breasts, raising her fist in anger said, "Janaki ! It is out of compassion and courtesy that we have endured all your harsh words, but it will do you no good if you do not act up to our words. Thou hast been brought here on the other side of the sea, difficult of being approached by others. Thou art, O Maithili, within the abode of Ravana and imprisoned in the Asoka forest and guarded by us all. Even Indra cannot rescue you. Do thou, therefore, hear my well-meaning words. Why do you shed tears ? Abandon your useless grief. Be happy and cheerful, renouncing your persistent melancholy. Do thou enjoy yourself at your pleasure with Ravana. O my timid damsel, thou knowest how transient is the beauty of a woman. And so long thy youth does not wither, pass your time happily. O fair damsel, roam in this fair garden over the hill, and other picturesque places happily with Ravana Wish for Ravana, and troop of women will wait upon you. If you do not pay heed to my words, I will pluck out your heart."

Then Chandadari of hideous look brandished a formidable lance and said that she would devour her by tearing her to pieces. Then Proghasa said, 'Why are we sitting idle ? Let us strangle this cruel woman to death, and then report the king about her death. He will, thereupon, surely ask us to devour her."

Then Ajamukhi said, "Let us kill the woman and divide meat equally. I don't like to bandy useless words. Just fetch water and garlands." Then Surpanakha said, "What Ajamukhi has said is right. This is also my own

view. Fetch wine, the balm of all sorrows—we shall dance before queen Nikumbhila after partaking of human flesh"

Then the nymph-like Sita began to weep hearing these cruel words.

CHAPTER XIX

LAMENTATION OF SITA

Then Sita being greatly frightened, choked with tears said, "You see, I am a woman, how can I be the wife of a Rakshasa? Rather you eat me up, there will be no harm then, but I won't be able to accede to your word."

Janaki was surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides and was trembling with fear as if she was sinking within herself. She was overwhelmed like a strayed fawn pursued by a tiger. Her mind was restless at their oppression. Supporting herself with help of a flowery bough of a Sinsapa tree, she began to think of Rama. Her tears bathed her breasts. How could she find consolation? She did not find any end to her miseries. Her face was darkened with grief, and was ever trembling like a plantain-leaf. A long braid of hair hung on her back and due to her trembling it swung like a snake. She was almost senseless with grief, and was breathing heavily. And she began to cry saying, "Alas, Rama! Alack, Lakshmana! Ah, Kausalya! Ah, Sumitra! Now I find the adage to be true that death never visits a man or woman before the appointed time or how could I sur-

vive these oppressions of the Rakshasis in absence of Rama? I am most unfortunate and am overwhelmed in ruin like laden cargo sunk by storm in the sea. Now I am under the sway of the Rakshasis and I cannot see Rama, so sorrow is consuming me up like the bank of a river off by the current. The blessed and the virtuous people are having sight of the lotus-eyed Rama. In absence of Rama it seems I am being consumed by a virulent poison. I know not what a heinous sin I did commit in my previous birth, that I am undergoing such terrible sufferings now. Woe unto this human existence, woe unto subjection, I shall give up my life."

Janaki seemed to be crazed with grief. She threw the dust like a tired mare. Her eyes were full of tears and she cried incessantly with a downcast face. "Alas! Rama was bewitched by Maricha's magic and Ravana carried me off by force in that opportune moment. I am now suffering immensely at the hands of the Rakshasis from their taunts and threats. What is the good of this life to suffer so much in the absence of Rama? What is the use of wealth or ornaments? It seems my heart is made of adamant and it is indestructible, hence it has not been broken yet in the absence of Rama. I am not a non-Aryan, low-born and unchaste. Shame to me that I am still alive even for a moment in the absence of Rama. What to speak of desiring Ravana, I shall not touch him even by my mean foot. This villain seems to be quite unconscious of the dignity of his birth and is quite indifferent about my refusal. He is of a cruel nature and he is now courting me through others. You may tear me from

limb to limb and burn me in fire. I shall never yield to Ravana. Rama is kind-hearted, gentle and wise, and it is due to my bad luck that he has grown unkind. Why doesn't he, who has slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas in Janasthana come to me? The powerless Ravana has confined me there. Rama can easily destroy him in battle. Why does he not set me free who slew Viradha in the Dandaka forest? This city of Lanka is girt by the sea on all sides; it is inaccessible to others, but Rama's shafts can penetrate everywhere, surely they will never be thwarted here. I am Rama's beloved wife—dear as his life, Ravana has carried me off by force. I know not why Rama is sitting idle without making any search for me. Perhaps he is not aware that I am here. Had he any knowledge of it, I would not brook this insult. Alas, one who could have informed him about this abduction is dead—Ravana has killed him.[1] Jatayu was old yet he bravely fought for me. If he could know that I am imprisoned here he would have certainly destroyed all the Rakshasas of the three worlds, would have reduced Lanka into ruins and would have dried up the sea and demolished all the glories of Ravana As I am crying now, in every home husbandless Rakshasis would have wept like me. Then heroic Rama with Lakshmana would have so chastised the Rakshasas that none would have survived if one came before their eyes The streets of Lanka will soon be dark with the smoke of the funeral

1 The recital of these previous events are evidently calculated to enable Hanuman to recognise her beyond doubt of Sita.—Translator.

pyres and will be infested with vultures. The city will be turned into a vast cremation-ground and my wishes will be fulfilled. Don't think that my words are unfounded, but disaster will visit you due to your bad luck. Various evil omens are now to be seen in Lanka, and it will soon lose its splendour. After the destruction of Ravana, the city of Lanka will wither away like a widow. Various festivities are now being held in the city, but it will soon grow desolate, and I shall hear the bitter cries of the Rakshasis from every house. If Rama can anyhow come to know that I am here, his arrows will tear it into pieces and envelop it in darkness, and none of the Rakshasa family will survive. The time allotted to the cruel Ravana is about to expire, and my end also is near. The Rakshasas are vicious and have no conscience and I shall have surely to meet death at their hands. The wicked people feeding on flesh do not care for virtue, but they will court great disaster by their vices. I am now a meal for their breakfast, but alas! I shall not meet Rama at the time of death. And how shall I give up my life without seeing Rama? Perhaps Rama does not know that I am still alive, or he would have searched the whole world for me, or it might be that he has renounced his life in my sorrow. Blessed are they who have seen Rama. Virtue is the goal of the intelligent and ascetic Rama, so there is no need of a wife, so he is not looking for me. There is an adage, *viz.*, 'out of sight out of mind', but this applies to the ungrateful wretches and not to Rama. Since I have lost his love, it is possible that I

have committed some wrong, or my luck is quite adverse. Whatever it might be, there is no more any use of my life. Perhaps those two brothers by renouncing their arms, are now roaming through the forest sustaining themselves on fruit and roots or the wicked Ravana has by his wiles put them to death. Death is now desirable to me, but death won't befall me even in such miseries. Blessed are the devotees and saints who are never agitated with sorrows or joys. I have lost love of Rama, and have come under the grip of Ravana. It is therefore better for me to die."

CHAPTER XX

DREAMS OF RAKSHASI TRIJATA

Then the Rakshasis were greatly enraged at these words of Janaki and some of them left the place in order to inform Ravana of these things, while others approaching Janaki said in a rude tone, "Ah, Non-Aryan ! Wait for a month and we shall tear you to pieces in great delight."

In the meantime, an old Rakshasi named Trijata being roused from sleep came there and threatening them said, "You see, Janaki is the daughter of Janaka and daughter-in-law of Dasaratha ; instead of tearing her to pieces, do ye devour one another. At the end of this night I had a dreadful dream. I think the Rakshasa king Ravana will be destroyed with all his family."

Thereupon, the Rakshasis were greatly frightened hearing of Trijata's fearful dream, and they asked, "Tell us what kind of dream thou didst dream this night."

Trijata replied, "I dreamed as if Rama wearing a piece of white cloth and putting on a white garland, had ascended, with Lakshmana, the *Vimana* chariot, made of ivory that plied through the sky. Thousands of steeds were carrying him away. At that time Janaki, clad in a white robe, was seated on a cliff surrounded by the sea; and as light merges into the sun, so she was united with Rama. I saw again Rama along with Lakshmana was riding on a terrible tusker. They were glowing with their energy like the effulgent sun, and they came near Janaki, clad in white apparel. I saw Rama taking an elephant from that hill and Janaki from his lap ascended upon it. She was about to reach the sun and the moon with her own hands, and Rama and Lakshmana were seated on an elephant high over Lanka. Rama arrived with Lakshmana in a fine chariot drawn by eight white bulls, and went towards the north with Sita riding upon the exceedingly bright Pushpakaratha. I saw Ravana with his head shaved and besmeared with oil, and he was drinking wine in mad excitement. He had a red cloth on his person, and a garland of Karavi on his neck. Being ejected from the Pushpakaratha he was roaming in the forest. I saw him again, he was then robed in black, he had a red garland on his neck, red sandal-paste on his person and a woman was dragging him by force. He was seated upon a chariot drawn by asses and his mind was unhinged. At times he was laughing, at times he was dancing, and at times he was drinking oil. Riding upon the ass he was proceeding

towards the south.[1] At one place, I saw him tumbled headlong from the ass on the ground and then again he got upon it with care. He had no cloth on his loins, and his tongue was full of foul words, and he soon fell into a dark, filthy and highly stinking pit and thence proceeding towards the south entered into a white lake. I further saw a dark woman clad in red and stained with mud appearing before him and she was dragging him towards the north by a piece of rope tied round his neck. Saw I further Kumbhakarna, Indrajit and other heroes who had their heads shaved and were quaffing oil.[2] I saw Ravana proceeding towards the south on the back of a boar, Indrajit on the back of a porpoise and Kumbhakarna on a camel's back. But I saw Vibhishana alone with a white umbrella and four ministers *with him. A well-decorated assembly-hall stood open* before him and music swelled from there. I saw again the gate of Lanka broken, and the city sunk under the sea. The Rakshasis were laughing, making great noise and drinking oil Everything of Lanka was reduced to ashes and Kumbhakarna and other heroes being dressed in red were entering into pools of cow-dung. Hear me Rakshasis, fly from this place. The heroic Rama will surely get back his Janaki. If you oppress Sita, Rama will never forgive that. He will surely destroy you all. Janaki is dear to him as his life, and she has

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1 South is the region of death.

2 Premonitions of death—Translator.

followed him in exile, and Rama will never excuse your threats to her. So give up your rude expressions, rather console her with sweet words Let us pray to her for our good. This is what seems to be right to me. Janaki is over-whelmed with grief; I dreamt of what portends good unto her. Let her be happy at the union with her lover being free from all afflictions. Great danger awaits the Rakshasas from Rama due to their ill-luck, and though you have behaved rudely with her, let us pray for her forgiveness. She will be pleased with our homage and bows, and will deliver us from great fear. You see I do not find any inauspicious sign on her person being devoid of all ornaments she only looks sad To tell the truth, her desire will be soon fulfilled. Ravana will meet with his death, and Rama will achieve the glory of victory. We shall soon hear of good news about Janaki; these dreams are there. Look how her lotus-eyes grow suddenly expanded, how her left hand is throbbing all on a sudden with all its hair standing on their ends. The sudden throbbing of her left thigh roundish like the trunk of an elephant forebodes the advent of Rama. These birds on the boughs of the trees with their notes are repeatedly announcing the advent of Rama so to speak."

Then the bashful Janaki being delighted hearing of Trijata's dreams, delightfully said, "Trijata! If what you say turns out to be true, surely I will save you all."

CHAPTER XXI

SITA'S SORROWS

Then Sita hearing of the evil news about Ravana was greatly frightened just like a doe in fear of a lion and she began co cry like a girl left in the wilderness. She lamented thus : "What the sages say is true ; surely death never happens to one before the appointed time ; otherwise this sinful soul could not have survived these sorrows. Alas, my heart now rends with grief as a rock is riven by the thunder. The unwelcome Ravana will kill me a month after ; then why shall I be guilty of sin if I give up my life ? I can't give myself up to him, as a Brahmin cannot initiate a non-Brahmin. Now if Rama does not come up here, this villian will cut me into pieces with sharp arrows, as a physician cuts with his instrument the foetus in the mother's womb.[1] I am miserable and without my husband and I shall have to bear the torments of death. Only two months remain. As a thief condemned to death by royal command, bound in fetters, awaits his death and as his agonies grow intense at the end of night before the morning of execution, so I do suffer. After the expiration of the appointed time, my fate will be similar. Alas, Rama ! Alack, Lakshmana ! Alas, Kausalya !

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1 Surgical operation on the foetus in the mother's womb in order to save the life of the mother is an advanced branch of modern surgery. Its reference in such an old book as the Ramayana speaks a volume The Hindus knew the therapeutic use of metals long, long before the modern medical science was born and made a considerable progress in surgery.—Translator.

Alas, mother! I am overwhelmed like a craft in the stormy sea. Alas! It is for me that Rama and Lakshmana lost their lives at the hands of the magic deer. It was I who was bewitched by the magic spell of the wicked Rakshasa and sent Rama and Lakshmana deep into the woods O, Rama! You are benign and truthful, don't you know that I am here condemned to death by the Rakshasa? Alas! My chastity, devotion, forgiveness and asceticism in lying on the ground have come to naught. Like good services to an ungrateful wretch, here virtues are of no avail. I have become emaciated, weak and dark in grief, so there is not the least hope of re-union with my husband. Oh, Rama! Perhaps after carrying out the behest of your father duly, you have, by this time, returned home, and there being happy and safe, you are now passing your time in the company of good many large-eyed damsels. But I am extremely devoted to you and I am ready to give up my life. In vain I have performed all religious rites, now I shall give up my life. Woe unto me, I am most unfortunate. I shall commit suicide either by poison or by the sword but there is none in this city of the Rakshasas to help me in that."

Janaki thus lamented thinking of Rama. Her face was dry, and she was trembling in all her limbs. She drew near the Sinsapa tree. Intense fire of grief was smouldering in her breast. She was long buried in thoughts and then taking the braid of hair that hung on her back she said, "I shall soon give up my life by twisting the hair round my neck." Then holding a

hranch of the Sinsapa tree, she began to cry thinking of Rama, Lakshmana and other members of her family.

CHAPTER XXII

HANUMAN THINKS

Janaki was extremely sad and wretched and she stood holding a branch of the Sinsapa tree. In the meantime various auspicious signs appeared on her person. The large left eye of the dame, having graceful lashes, *having dark pupil, white ends, red margin*, began to quiver like a lotus shaken by a fish. Her lovely, plump and round left arm, scented with Sandal and Aguru, and which so long served Rama as a pillow began to throb quite all on a sudden, and her fleshy left thigh, roundish like an elephant's trunk, by repeated throbbings indicated as if Rama had appeared before her, and her amber-coloured cloth stained with dust also slipped a little.

Then the damsel having beautiful teeth like pomegranate seeds, became enlivened with joy at these omens, as a seed withered by the sun and the wind is revived by the rain. Her face became bright like the moon released from the eclipse. She was free from grief and her exhaustion was gone. Then her beauteous countenance was augmented in brightness, as the beauty of the night is enhanced by the moon.

Hanuman being concealed in the Sinsapa tree, heard everything,—Janaki's lamentations, Trijata's dream, and the threats of the Rakshasis.

Then that great hero, beholding Janaki like a heavenly damsel in the garden of Nandana, thus began to think, "For whom thousands of Vanaras are searching in different regions, I see her before me For whom as a spy of Sugriva I was estimating the strength of the enemy in secret, I behold her today before me. I have witnessed the pomp and power of Ravana after crossing the ocean. I shall now, console that devoted wife of Rama. This moon-like beauty did never suffer any sorrow in life, but she is now groaning under it. I shall soothe her now. If I go away without consoling her, I shall be guilty of a grave derelicton of duty and this princess too will renounce her life without finding any means of her release. As it is necessary to console Rama who is anxious for her sight, so it is expedient to encourage her with hopes. But I see the Rakshasis all round her. It is not judicious to talk to her in their presence. Now, what shall I do ? I am in a fix. If I go away without consoling her at the end of the night, surely she will die. If I go away without talking to her, how shall I stand before him when he will ask, 'What did Sita say about me ?' Surely, for this fault he will reduce me to ashes with angry eyes. If I ask Sugriva to make preparations for war without telling him everything, then his arrival here with his troops will be vain. However, I shall be careful and when the Rakshasis will be unmindful, I shall console her with gentle words. I am a petty Vanara, still I speak Sanskrit like a common man. But if I speak in Sanskrit like a Brahmin, then Sita may be greatly

frightened thinking me to be Ravana. It is, therefore proper to speak in the ordinary dialect of a common man[1], otherwise it won't be possible to console her in any way. Janaki is already overwhelmed with fear of the Rakshasas, so she will be surely alarmed at my sight and speech. Then she will burst into cries considering me to be Ravana who can assume any form at his will. At her cries the grim Rakshasis will gather and search the place, and they will try to bind me and put me to death. Then I shall jump from tree to tree assuming my own form. At that sight the Rakshasis will be greatly frightened and will call the warders. Then the sentries will speedily arrive with their arrows and lances. I shall then be at once secured, and the Rakshasas will easily take me away, so Janaki won't know anything about it. The Rakshasas are cruel and they will not even shrink to put her to death in the meantime. Janaki lives in secrecy in this place girt by the sea, and guarded by the Rakshasas on all sides, and I see there is no entry to Lanka, and if I yield to my capture, Rama will lose one who can help him in his enterprise, and I see none who will be able to cross hundred *Yojanas* of the sea in my absence. Further, it is not known what party will win in the

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1 This passage shows that Sanskrit was not the ordinary dialect even of the people of the upper class, but, of course, it could be understood by them. Sanskrit was spoken only by learned men among whom Ravana was surely one and by those who belonged to the priestly class. (Vide also Muir's Sanskrit Texts).—Translator.

war. So I do not like to meddle in an uncertain matter. If I talk to her just now, all these troubles are likely to follow, whereas if I do not, Sita will die. Works almost completed is often foiled by the foolishness of an incompetent emissary. Sometimes, a policy is frustrated by the indiscretion of an envoy. It is now my duty to be careful so that all the labours of crossing the sea be not in vain. I should devise some means so that Janaki may listen to my words without any fear."

After debating thus in his mind Hanuman decided, "She is now thinking of Rama, if I now utter the name of that hero, she won't be frightened. I shall now communicate to her in a sweet and subdued voice what I have to say, after recounting the pious deeds of Rama, the foremost of the Ikshwaku line. I shall employ only those words so that she can believe me."

CHAPTER XXIII

HANUMAN'S SPEECH

After deciding thus, Hanuman came near Janaki and in gentle words began, "There was a noble king by the name of Dasaratha. He was well accomplished, beautiful and gifted with royal marks. He was born of the Ikshwaku line and had his sway all over the world. Rama is the eldest son of that Dasaratha. He is the foremost of those who are skilled in bows and arrows. He is gentle and the protector of his own people. He is wise and virtuous. That noble hero, at the command of his father, came into forest with his wife and brother

and while he roamed in the forest for hunting he killed many Rakshasa warriors and Khara and Dushana with the troops of Janasthana. . The Rakshasa king, Ravana, was greatly enraged at this news and deluded him by the magic of Maricha who tempted Rama by transforming himself into a deer and then Ravana abducted Sita. Rama then made friends with Sugriva in the course of his search for Sita, slew Vali and conferred the rule of Vanara kingdom on Sugriva. Then Vanaras at the command of Sugriva went out in all directions in search of Janaki, and I have crossed hundred *Yojanas* of the sea at the words of Sampati. From what I have heard from Rama, and Lakshmana about the beauty, colour and signs you seem to be Sita."

Thus saying, the heroic Hanuman became silent. Janaki was extremely delighted and raising her face screened by locks of her hair, cast her glance towards the Sinsapa tree. She was extremely delighted at the news of Rama. Then she looked upwards and downwards and cast stealthy glances around her ; in the meantime, Hanuman fell upon her eyes like the rising sun.

Hanuman was clad in white, and lay concealed within the branches of the Sinsapa tree. Janaki was startled at his sight. Hanuman was modest, and sweet-speeched ; his appearance was red like the Asoka flowers and his eyes were of tawny brown colour. Janaki was deeply amazed and took the Vanara to be a formidable being. She was overwhelmed with fear finding him incapable of being stared upon. Her mind was filled with various misgivings and she uttered in an inaudible voice the

names of Rama and Lakshmana in grief and began to weep. She again looked at the Vanara, and thought that perhaps she was dreaming. She was more dead than alive at the sight of the Vanara and was about to faint. After a long time she recovered her senses and thought, "A Vanara of forbidding sight fell on my eyes. However, let prosperity attend on Rama, Lakshmana and king Janaka. It is not a dream, for sleep has left me for my sorrows; there is no happiness in my mind since the absence of Rama. I think of Rama always and utter his name and whatever I see or hear is after my thoughts about him. Now what I have seen just now is not my fancy, for understanding has nothing to do with imagination, nor an imaginary object can be perceived. I am seeing the Vanara clearly before my eyes and I am hearing his voice distinctly. Now, I bow down to Vrihaspati, Indra, Brahma and Agni. Let what the Vanara has just now said prove to be true."

CHAPTER XXIV

HANUMAN'S MESSAGE

Thereupon, Hanuman, the effulgent son of the Wind-god humbly approached Janaki and greeted her. Then joining his two palms over his head respectfully began, "Who art thou, O lotus-eyed beauty, that wearing a soiled silken cloth art standing, holding a branch of the tree? Why do tears of sorrow fall from your eyes like drops of water from the petals of a lotus? To which class amongst the gods, Asuras, Nagas,

Yakshas, Rakshasas and the Kinnaras do you belong? Art thou in any way related to Rudra, Marut or the Vasus? Perhaps, thou art Rohini, the best of the stars that has fallen from the heavenly region being deprived of the affection of the Moon! Art thou the worshipful Arundhati, Oh, auspicious beauty? Have you offended sage Vasishtha either through ignorance or anger? Who is your son, who is your brother, who is your father and who is your husband? From your tears, from your sights, from your touching the ground, you seem to be a worshipful lady and not a celestial.[1] From the auspicious marks on your person, it appears that thou art either the consort or the daughter of a king. Art thou Sita whom Ravana has stolen away from Janasthana? May good happen to thee. From thy miserable plight, ascetic dress and unearthly beauty, it seems to me that thou art the queen of Rama."

Thereupon, Janaki on hearing Rama's name cheerfully said, "I am the daughter-in-law of the mighty Dasaratha, the foremost of the kings, daughter of the saintly Janaka and am the wife of the virtuous Rama, my name is Sita. I passed twelve happy years in my father-in-law's house after marriage. Then on the thirteenth year, king Dasaratha desired to invest the crown on Rama. On seeing the preparation for the coronation ceremony queen Kaikeyi told Dasaratha that she would abstain from food and drink and that she would put an

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1 It is believed that the celestials do not touch the ground.

end to her life if he would confer the crown on Rama. So she asked him to send Rama to the forest and fulfil his pledge to her. The king Dasaratha was stupefied by these cruel words, thinking of his pledge of granting boons to her. But he was firmly devoted to truth and with tearful eyes he asked Rama to retire to the forest after conferring the kingdom on Bharata. At that time his sire's command pleased Rama more than his prospect of installation, and he cheerfully agreed to it. Rama never takes back what he gives ; he is devoted to truth and never utters any lie. Glorious Rama putting aside his rich apparel, renounced his desire for the kingdom and made me over to his mother. But I did not agree to that arrangement and soon followed him in his exile to the forest. To speak the truth, I do not even covet heaven without Rama. The friendly Lakshmana, in order to accompany Rama, first of all dressed himself in Kusa grass and bark. Thus abiding by the behest of the king we entered the deep forest, never seen before. For some time, we lived in the Dandaka forest. In the meantime the wicked Ravana stole me away from there. He has allowed me two months' time. After which I shall surely give up my life "

Then Hanuman consoling Sita, overwhelmed with sorrow, said, "O worshipful lady, by Rama's command I have come as a messenger to you. He is quite well and has enquired of your welfare. He who is the master of heavenly arms and of the Vedas hath enquired after your well-being. And he who is the constant

attendant of Rama, that heroic Lakshmana too has conveyed his salutations and greetings to your feet."

Thereupon, Janaki became extremely glad at the good news of Rama and Lakshmana. She said, "The saying that a man can enjoy happiness even once in a hundred years in this world seems to be true." In fact Sita was delighted at Hanuman's words, as she would have been at the actual sight of Rama and Lakshmana. In the meantime, Hanuman gradually drew near. As he advanced one or two steps, Sita was filled with apprehensions; and her suspicion that Ravana had come to deceive with a ruse became more and more confirmed in her mind. With a distressed heart she mused, "Woe unto me! Alas, why did I talk to him? It is Ravana I find, who has come in a different guise by virtue of magic."

Then Janaki leaving the branch of the Sinsapa tree sat upon the ground. Hanuman, after advancing a little, greeted her. But she was greatly frightened at that time and could not cast her eyes on him, and heaving a deep sigh, said in a sweet voice, "Perhaps thou art Ravana and hast come to distress me again changing your form by virtue of magic, but this is not worthy of you. Thou art surely Ravana whom I saw in the mendicant's garb at Janasthana You are, no doubt, Ravana. But it does not behove you to distress me thus who is poorly and famished with fasts. Or perhaps my apprehensions are unfounded, for there is a feeling of joy ever since I have seen you for the first time. Now, if you be a messenger of Rama, please tell me what I ask;

everything connected with Rama is dear to me. May good happen to thee! Do thou relate the glories of Rama. You are shaking off my firmness, as a mighty current of water sweeps away the bank and renders it un-firm. Ah, what a pleasent dream! I have been long carried off in dream, but now I see Rama's messenger. If I could once see dear Rama and Lakshmana, then I would not have sunk like this. But due to my ill-luck even dreams are inimical to me. Perhaps it is not a dream, for such joy is not possible after seeing a Vanara in a dream. Perhaps it is an illusion. Or is it insanity? Perhaps it is a mirage! I can not fully understand myself nor the Vanara."

After thus debating in her mind, Janaki took the Vanara for the wily Ravana, and then ceased to talk to him. Hanuman then fully realising her thoughts, began to speak in words pleasant to the ear, causing immense delight to Janaki, "Great Rama is spirited like the sun and beautiful like the moon. Every one is warmly devoted to him. He is prosperous like Kuvera and heroic like famous Vishnu. He is sweet-tongued and devoted to truth like Vrihaspati. He is exceedingly beautiful, he is Cupid incarnate. His royal sceptre is raised in proper places.[1] He is the best of men and the world enjoys happiness under the shadow of his arms.[2] And you will witness that the wicked Villain that lured away that great hero by the guise of a deer and carried

1 That is, he punishes justly.

2 Under his protection.—Translator.

you away from the empty hermitage, will soon reap the consequences of his act. He will soon destroy Ravana with fiery arrows discharged in wrath. I have come to you at his command. Being greatly afflicted by your separation he enquires about your welfare. Rama's friend Sugriva has enquired about your well-being. They always think of you. It is by chance that you are always surrounded by the Rakshasis. You will soon meet Rama and Lakshmana and the Kapi-chief, Sugriva, amongst the Vanaras. At his command, I have crossed the ocean and entered into Lanka, defying the prowess of Ravana. I am not the wily Ravana, banish your apprehension and fear and depend upon my words."

CHAPTER XXV

HANUMAN'S SPEECH

Then Janaki hearing about Rama from Hanuman sweetly replied. "O Vanara! How are you connected with Rama? How has there been a friendship between men and the monkeys? Do thou relate the regal signs that adorn Rama. Then I shall be free from sorrow"

Thereupon, Hanuman replied, "It is my good luck that you have put such questions to me. I shall presently relate unto you all the auspicious marks that I have observed upon the persons of Rama and Lakshmana, O daughter of Janaka! Rama has eyes like lotus petals and a countenance like the full-moon. He is beautiful from his very birth, and is sincere. He is effulgent like the sun, in forgiveness like the earth, in intelligence

like Vrihaspati and in fame like Vasava. He always follows the right path in every walk of his life, and never swerves from his royal duties. He is the upholder of the four castes, he confers honour upon people and preserves them. Like the sun he is worshipped by all. He observes ascetic vows, he honours saints and proclaims their good services. He is well versed in polity and is greatly devoted to the Brahmanas. He has mastery over Yajurveda, Dhanurveda[1] and the Vedangas.[2] He is honoured by the scholars of the Vedas. He is broad-shouldered, his arms are long and beautiful, he has a conch-like neck and beautiful countenance. His throat is plump and his eyes are red. And he is known all over the world by the name of Rama. He has a deep voice like that of a trumpet. His colour is of glossy green. He has equally proportioned limbs. His thighs, and wrists are hard, and brows, arms and scrotum are long and he has even knees. His navel is deep and his abdomen and breast are covered with downy streaks of hair. Angles of the eyes, nails and palms are copper-coloured His gait is slow and majestic. His belly and throat have three folds of skin. There are lines in the soles of his feet. His back is short. He has three locks of hair on his head. He has four lines on his thumb indicating his proficiency in the four Veads. His

1 The Veda which deals with the art of warfare and use of arms, e g., arrows.

2 The branches and episodes of the Vedas, generally the Upanishads.

body is four cubits tall; his arms, thighs and cheeks are even and plump; eyebrows, the hollows of the nose, lips, nipples, wrists, knee-joints, hips, arms, and feet are evenly proportionate. He is gifted with auspicious marks of the Shastras. His gait is like that of a lion, tiger, elephant, and of a bull. His lips and jaws are fleshy. His nose is pointed. His words are sweet and his skin is smooth. His two arms, two little fingers, two thighs and two legs are long. His breast, forehead, neck, arms, navel, feet and back are spacious. He is gifted with grace, fame and effulgence. Both his paternal and maternal lines are pure. His breasts, nose, shoulders and forehead are high. His fingers, hairs, down, nails, skin, beard, eye-sight and intellect are sharp. Raghava with a due division of his time is engaged in acquiring virtue, wealth, emancipation and desire. He is truthful and graceful. He amasses wealth and thereby protects all. He has proper knowledge of time and place for everything and he is dear unto all. His step-brother Saumitri is gifted with incomparable prowess and is equal in attachament, beauty and accomplishment. The body of that beautiful one is of gold hue, whereas that of the glorious Rama is green. And these two lions of men have no other delight but seeking thee and while they ransacked the world in search of you they met us in the forest and ranging the earth for you they found Sugriva, the lord of the Vanaras, at the foot of the Rishyamuka mountain covered with trees, banished by his elder brother, Vali, and resorting there in his fear, and we were serving that truthful Sugriva, the lord of the

Vanaras, driven from the kingdom by his elder brother. And beholding those two best of men clad in bark and with bows in their hands, that foremost of the Vanaras stricken with fear, leaped up and stationed himself on the summit of the hill. He then sent me to them, and thereupon by Sugriva's decree I approached with joined palms those two foremost of men, endowed with beauty and royal signs. They were pleased with me. Being informed of the real facts and placing those two princes on my back, I arrived at the top of the hill and communicated the truth unto the high-souled Sugriva. Then conversing with each other, those two lords of men and Vanaras attained great delight, and they consoled each other narrating their respective tales of misfortune. Rama then consoled Sugriva turned out by his formidable brother Vali on account of his wife. Thereupon, Lakshmana related to Sugriva, the Lord of the Kapis, the sorrow of Rama in consequence of your being carried off by Ravana, and hearing Lakshmana's words, the Lord of the Vanaras grew pale, like the bright sun under the jaws of Rahu. And collecting all those ornaments which were thrown off by thee on the ground when thou wert borne off, the leader of the Vanara hosts brought them before Rama, but they could not make out your whereabouts, and all those ornaments which were handed over to Rama, were collected by me when they fell jingling on the ground. Rama was beside himself with grief and placed them on his lap. The God-like Rama bewailed in various accents. Those accentuated his grief more. And being overwhelmed with it, that high-souled one laid

himself low on the ground. And I raised him up with various words. And looking again and again with Saumitri at those precious ornaments, Raghava handed them over to Sugriva. O worshipful lady! Raghava is being consumed with grief in thy absence, like unto a volcano smouldering with a perpetual fire Grief, anxiety and sleeplessness are distressing Rama for thee like unto three fires[1] burning down the fire-temple. Raghava has been moved by the separation like a huge mountain shaken by a terrible earthquake. O daughter of a king! He is roaming through forests, rivers and fountains but he finds delight nowhere, O Janaki! Raghava will soon regain thee bringing about the destruction of Ravana with all his kith and kin. Rama, the foremost of men, and Sugriva entered into a friendly alliance to compass Vali's destruction and to search for thee. Thereupon, those two princes came to Kishkindhya and killed Vali, the lord of the Vanaras, in battle. And destroying Vali by his prowess, Rama made Sugriva king over all the Vanaras and the Bhallukas. And in this way, O dame, the alliance between Rama and Sugriva was made. I am their emissary and my name is Hanuman. The Kapi chief, Sugriva, after obtaining the kingdom has sent the Vanaras in different directions in search of you. They are now ranging over the whole world. Prince Angada has set out with one third of the whole army. I have come with that Angada. In our journey we met with many difficulties in the Vindhya hill and

1 Three fires maintained by the Brahmana householder taken together.—Translator.

many days were unfortunately spent in that region. We then passed our days in despair of accomplishing our task and we were getting ourselves ready for death in fear of Sugriva. I searched mountains, hills, fountains, rills and forests and getting no clue about you, we began to observe fast in order to give up our life by starvation. At this, Angada began to lament, talked again and again about your absence, destruction of Vali and about our fast unto death. At that very time, a huge formidable bird arrived there ; his name was Sampati. He was the brother of Jatayu. Having heard from Angada about his brother's death, he angrily enquired about the slayer of Jatayu. In reply to his query Angada said that the wicked Ravana had carried you away from Janasthana and that he had killed Jatayu. At this Sampati was greatly overwhelmed with sorrow, and we had the information from him that you were in Lanka.

"Being encouraged by these words of the Vihanga chief we emerged from the Vindhya hill and arrived at the sea-shore. Then we became highly anxious. The Vanara hosts grew sad finding no means of getting at Lanka. Then I crossed hundred *Yojanas* of the sea and entered the city of the Rakshasas by night and saw you and Ravana.

"O worshipful lady ! I have narrated everything from the beginning to the end. Now condescend to speak to me. I am Rama's messenger and it is for Rama that I have done this daring act. I have come here for your whereabouts. The Wind-God is my father and I am a minister of Sugriva. Now, Rama is quite well ;

so is the auspicious Lakshmana devoted to the services of his elder brother. I have come here at the command of Sugriva. It is for you that I have come towards the south. The Vanara hosts are greatly anxious for your absence. Now, I shall cheer them up by your news. All the labours of my crossing the sea, to my good luck, have been crowned with success. O worshipful lady ! Now I shall win the glory of finding you out and the heroic Rama will soon recover you by destroying Ravana with his brood. I am Hanuman, son of Keshari, the Kapi chief. This Keshari lived in a beautiful hill called Malyavan , thence he repaired to the Gokarna hill. There, at the holy watering place, he at the requests of the saints killed an Asura named Sadan I am that Keshari's son, born of his wife from the seed of the Wind-God, and by my prowess I am known as Hanuman. I cited all these things previously to create confidence of Rama in me. Be now assured, he will soon rescue you from this place."

Then Sita from these unimpeachable proofs believed Hanuman to be an emissary of Rama. Her mind was filled with delight and tears came to her eyes, and her face shone like the moon just released from the shadow of eclipse He took Hanuman to be a Vanara. And all her doubts and apprehensions were removed. After that Hanuman said to the beautiful damsel, pleasant to the sight, "Be now comforted. I have told you everything. Now, say what I am to do and what is your own desire. Just tell me I won't stop here long I am born of the seed of the Wind-God and I am like him. I shall accomplish by my prowess whatever you may ask me to do"[1]

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1 These and the following chapters are said to have suggested to Kalidas, so says Mallinatha, his immortal commentator, about the scheme of his immortal poem Meghaduta or the cloud messenger.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE RING

Then Hanuman in order to create confidence in Sita's mind, said, 'O worshipful dame! I am the messenger of the intelligent Rama and a Vanara by race Behold this ring with Rama's name engraved on it Rama has made it over to me and I have brought it for your confidence. Be comforted, your sorrows will soon be over.'

Thereupon Janaki taking the ring that used to adorn her lord's finger, gazed at it with thirsty eyes. And she was delighted with it as she would have been by the actual presence of Rama. Her beautiful face brightened with joy, just like the moon emerged from the eclipse, and she, welcoming Hanuman with affection, cheerfully, said, "O Vanara! Since you have succeeded in coming alone to this city of the Rakshasas, you are undoubtedly clever, bold and heroic. Great is thy prowess since you have crossed hundred Yojanas of the sea full of crocodiles and sharks, thinking it as a mere pool, and your heroism is indeed praiseworthy. O hero! I can't take you for an ordinary person, you are neither afraid at the sight of the ocean, nor of Ravana. If you have come here at the behest of Rama, then talk to me. Rama wouldn't have sent an ordinary unknown man to me. It is to my good luck that I have learnt about the welfare of Rama and Lakshmana. Tell me, thou messenger, nothing untoward has happened to Rama. Why does he not reduce the earth, encircled by the

oceans, into ashes by the fire of his wrath, like the doomsday-fire ? Neither is it difficult for him to vanquish the Gods, but it seems to me that due to my ill luck the period of sorrow is not over. O hero ! Is Rama now overwhelmed with grief? Is he not trying to rescue me ? Has he been overwhelmed with miseries and fear ? Does he lose his intelligence at the time of work ? Has he the desire of displaying his manliness ? Does he not wish to acquire victory by winning friends by equality and fraternity, and by punishing his enemies, or sowing dissensions amongst them ? Has he got true friends ? Does he show them respect and love ? Is he idle to invoke the blessings of the Gods ? Has he grown indifferent to me on account of being at a distance from me? That prince never suffered before, but always lived in happiness. Has he been overwhelmed by a succession of misfortunes? Is he always informed about the welfare of the worshipful Kausalya, Sumitra and Bharata? Has Rama been quite overwhelmed with grief in absence of me ? Is he always unmindful ? Will not Bharata, devoted to his brother, spare his army, under the command of his ministers, for my rescue ? Will not Sugriva, the Kapi king, come here surrounded by his sharp Vanara army ? Will not heroic Lakshmana destroy the Rakshasas with his sharp arrows ? Shall I not see Ravana soon destroyed with his family by Rama's shafts ? Has the lotus-scented countenance of Rama been withered, as a lotus is dried up by the intense heat of the sun ? Is he now free from all fears and sorrows, as he was when he renounced the kingdom for piety and

entered the forest with me on foot? O messenger! There is no dearer person, father or mother, to Rama than myself. So long as I do not receive any information of Rama I shall manage to live" Saying this Janaki lapsed into silence to listen to the sweet words concerning Rama.

Then Hanuman raising his hands over his head and with joined palms began, "O worshipful lady! The lotus-eyed Rama does not know that you are now living in Lanka, or he would have surely rescued you by this time. Now, after receiving your information from me he will soon arrive here with the Vanara hosts, and will agitate the undisturbable deep by his arrows, and denude the city of Lanka of all the Rakshasas. Even if Death himself interferes, or the Gods stand against him, he will surely destroy them all. O lady! Rama being stricken with grief for your absence has become restless like an elephant harassed by a lion. I swear by the names of the Malaya, the Mandara, the Vindhya, the Sumeru and the Dardura mountains[1] and by touching these fruits and roots, that you will soon behold the face of Rama, beautiful as the rising full-moon, and adorned with ear-rings, O worshipful dame, you will soon witness Rama seated on the Prasravana hill like Indra seated on Airavata. In your absence he does not touch meat and wine, but subsists on fruits and

1 Swearing is a primitive habit of man. Here, Hanuman swears not by name of any deity but by hills and mountains, by fruits and roots.—Translator.

roots, and that prince passes the whole night in your thought and is never conscious of mosquitoes, insects or reptiles. He is always morose and pensive, and in your absence no other thoughts but yours ever arise in his mind. He ever suffers from sleeplessness, and if he at all falls asleep, he suddenly wakes up with the gentle cry of "Sita" on his lips. He heaves deep sighs whenever he sees any fruit, flower or anything dear to a woman, and sheds tears uttering, 'Alack, my love!' O lady, that hero is thus being tormented now, and he is ever trying to get you back."

Thereupon, Janaki of a moon-like face replied, "O Vanara! Your words are like honey mixed with gall! That Rama is always thinking of me is sweet as nectar, but that he is overwhelmed with grief is bitter as poison. Whether a man be in great prosperity, or extreme difficulty,—Fate, as if by a rope, draws every one to his destiny. In fact, none can over-ride Fate, and it is due to this Fate that we have fallen into such distress. Now with great efforts and care will we see the end of these sorrows, as one with great difficulty swims to the shore, when the boat gets foundered on the sea I know not when that great hero will come to me destroying Ravana with his broad-sword and levelling Lanka to the ground? Request him to accomplish the task quickly; I shall keep my life till this year does not expire. According to the period of time appointed by the cruel Ravana, this is the tenth month, and two months remain. Vibhishana entreated Ravana much to

restore me to Rama, but that villain paid no heed. He is in the grip of Death and Death himself is goading him to battle. Vibhishana's eldest daughter, named Kala, once came to me at the behest of her mother and she has related all this to me There is an old, wise and educated Rakshasa named Avindhya, and Ravana holds him in great esteem ; he once told Ravana that if he did not return me to Rama, then the Rakshasa race would be extinct, but this villain did not pay any heed to his words.

"O Vanara ! Now, it seems to me that Rama will soon recover me. There is no doubt about it Whenever I think of his prowess, my rescue does not seem to be at all difficult. Energy, manliness and prowess are present in him. Which enemy of Rama would not shrink from him who has slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas alone in Janasthana without the help of Lakshmana ? Though the Rakshasas have put him into trouble, they can never be compared with him. I am aware of his prowess, as Sachi of Indra's He is like the glowing sun, his arrows are his rays, now he will surely dry up the Rakshasas like water"

Then Hanuman said, 'O worshipful lady ! After hearing thy news from me, Rama will soon arrive here with the Vanaras and the Bhallukas Or you get upon my back ; I shall to-day rescue you from the sufferings at the hands of the Rakshasas, as I shall be able to cross the ocean easily taking you on my back I shall even carry Lanka[1] with Ravana. I shall present you to

1 A physical impossibility but this spirit of bragging is due to poetical Hyperboles. Perhaps the under-

Rama as fire conveys sacrificial offerings to Indra. To-day, you will surely see Rama and Lakshmana, mighty as Vishnu. O lady ! Rama is greatly anxious for a sight of you and he is waiting on the hill, so get upon my back. Don't neglect, or be indifferent to this proposal. You will be united with Rama like the star Rohini with the moon. Seeing all auspicious marks on you, it appears to me that you will be soon united with Rama. Now get upon my back, I shall cross the sea through the air. None of the Rakshasas will be able to follow me' O worshipful lady ! In the manner I have come here, I shall return by the same way taking you on my back."

Janaki was both delighted and astonished at these words. She said, "O hero ! How will you carry me through such a long distance ? To tell you the truth, these words prove your apish nature.[1] You are quite puny in size, how will you take me to Rama ?"

"This", Hanuman thought, "is my first and new defeat from Janaki's words She is quite ignorant of

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lying meaning is that Hanuman could carry off Sita without any risk whatsoever.

1 From these words it is clear that in yore the people of the Deccan (Southern India) were at first derisively called monkeys, perhaps in distinction from the civilised Aryans, but when the Ramayana was composed, they were fairly an advanced people, but the former stigma to their names still remained, and the poet's imagination and popular fancy, still played with their names and loved to depict them with all the tricks and absurdities of apish nature. These words verily testify to this fact.

my strength and prowess. Let her now witness what shape and size I may assume at my will." Thus thinking Hanuman resolved to reveal his own form to Janaki, and coming down from the Sinsapa tree he began to expand in bulk to inspire confidence in Sita. He was flaming in effulgence like the Mandara hill. His body was formidable, face red and his teeth and nails hard as the thunderbolt. Then assuming his original form and standing before Janaki he said, "O worshipful lady! I shall easily carry away this city of Lanka with its forests, hills, palaces, gates and even with Ravana. Believe me, and entertain no doubts about it. Remove Rama's and Lakshmana's grief by going along with me."

Then the lotus-eyed Janaki seeing the formidable form of Hanuman said, "O hero! I now realise your prowess and strength. Your speed is like the wind, energy like Fire. In truth, how could an ordinary man ever come here? However, I have not the slightest doubt that you will be able to cross the ocean taking me with you. But you are to act after careful consideration. You see, when you will carry me on your back, I may be paralysed with fear at thy great speed I shall remain on the air over the ocean; at that time I may even slip down from your back The sea is full of aquatic animals, and if I fall into it I shall surely be devoured by sharks and crocodiles. O hero! I am a woman; if you take me with you, the Rakshasas seeing me thus abducted, will inform Ravana and will chase you at his command. Then those Rakshasa warriors will surround thee, and your life will be in danger.

They are armed, whereas, you are single In these circumstances how will you avoid them? Perhaps there will come a fight between you and them Then I may fall from your back quite trembling with fear. The Rakshasas are most formidable; they may even partly win victory over you, or if you be victorious at all, then at the time of the fight you may be unmindful about my protection I shall then fall down from your back, and the Rakshasas will carry me away. At that time they may even kill me from thy hands. Again victory and defeat are uncertain in battle. At the field of battle the Rakshasas will set up terrible yells, and I shall surely be stricken with fear; then all your efforts will be fruitless. O hero! Though you can easily destroy the Rakshasas, yet by your act you will rob Rama of his glory, or the Rakshasas, wresting me from your hands may keep me concealed in such a secret place that neither Rama, nor the Vanaras will know anything about it. So all your labours for me, as crossing the ocean and other efforts, will be in vain.

"But, if on the other hand, you come here with Rama, it will bear great fruit. The lives of the heroic Rama, Lakshmana, of yourself, of Sugriva and of other Vanaras are at my disposal, but if you despair about my rescue I shall surely give up my life. O hero, on account of my devotion towards my husband, I do not wish to touch the body of a third person. The wicked Ravana forcibly touched my person, but what could I do? Then I was quite helpless and overwhelmed with grief and

fear. It is now Rama's duty to come personally and rescue me from this place. I have myself witnessed the prowess of that great hero. There is no match for him amongst the Gods, the Gandharvas, the Uragas. Who can face him when he is seen burning like a flame taking up arrows in his hand in the field of battle? When in the field of battle he, along with Lakshmana, roams like an infuriated elephant; bright effulgence comes from him like the rays from the doomsday sun. O messenger! Bring him soon here with Sugriva. I have been greatly afflicted with sorrow in absence of Rama Make me happy by bringing him here."

CHAPTER XXVII

SITA'S MESSAGE

Then, Hanuman, being mightily pleased with Janaki's words, began to speak, "You have said what is just and consistent with feminine nature, modesty and devotion to the husband. You are a woman, so it is impossible for you to cross hundred *Yojanas* of the sea sitting on my back. O Janaki, you have just now mentioned, that it is not proper for you to touch anybody besides Rama; these words are worthy of Rama's consort. Who else could have spoken like that? Now, Rama will hear from me all that you have just now stated to me. I have told you all these for my affectionate solicitations for Rama's welfare. This city of Lanka is highly impregnable, and the sea too is very difficult to cross, but my strength too is extraordinary. I have therefore told you all these. It is my desire to

get you re-united even this day with Rama. In fact, it is my love for him and my respect for you that have induced me, to propose like this. Don't think I have any other motive behind it. Now, if you are not prepared to go with me, give me some token to create Raghava's confidence."

Thereupon, Janaki, hoarse with tears, said, "O envoy, please mention to Rama about this excellent remembrancer. There is a hill to the north east of the Chitrakuta mountain. It abounds with fruits and flowers and are inhabited by pious saints. The Mandakini flows at a short distance from it. What I am speaking of to you occurred at that place. Go and report my words to Rama. Tell him that after sporting in the water in the fragrant wood-land of the Chitrakuta, once he sat on my lap with clothes wet with water. At that time, a crow being desirous to feed on my flesh tore my breasts with its beak, and I threatened it with a stone, but it continued to tear my breasts and did not fly off. Being annoyed and angry with that bird as I tried to tighten the cloth round my waist, it slipped a little I drew my zone again and again, and thou looked at me in that situation and laughed over it. And I was greatly enraged and ashamed by your laughter and being wounded by the crow, I drew near you. Thereupon, tired as I was, I was pacified by your caress and laugh. Tears were on my face and I was wiping off my eyes with my cloth. I was greatly angry with the bird. Then I slept for a long time from fatigue on your lap, and you too in turn slept over mine

"After that, I awoke and stood up. The crow too again came near me and tore my breast with his beak. On your rising from sleep, you were greatly enraged seeing me thus bruised and torn, and said, with a thundering voice, 'Tell me who hast torn thy breast; who has wished to play with a penta-hooded angry snake?' Saying this you cast your eyes round and suddenly saw that crow with bloody claws before me. He was the son of Indra; in speed he was like the wind and was living in a sub-terranean cave On seeing it, your eyes revolved in anger and resolving to kill him at once, you took up a blade of grass from the grassy seat and fixed it to your bow with Brahma *mantra*. Thereupon, the blade of grass aimed at the bird glowed with fire that would destroy the world. You then hurled that flaming blade at the crow and it chased the crow high over the sky. Being thus chased, the crow to save himself traversed various regions and being renounced by his father, Indra, and the great sages, he after ranging the three worlds at last resorted to Rama's shelter. You are protector of those who seek shelter under you. Seeing him lying at your feet, weak and pale you took pity on him and said, 'O crow! It is impossible to render this Brahma weapon futile; therefore, O bird, speak what is to be done' He then offered his right eye for life, and you destroyed his right eye. Then bowing to you and to king Dasaratha, the crow took his leave.

"O Lord! When you discharged dreadful Brahma weapon against a crow for me, why are you then sparing that villain who has stolen me away from you? Whose

husband thou art that she is now like a husbandless woman ; have pity on her I have heard from your own lips that kindness is the highest virtue. You are energetic and heroic, and your gravity is like that of the sea. You are foremost of the heroes and mighty Why do you not destroy the Rakshasas ? There is none amongst the Gods and the Gandharvas who can resist Rama in battle Now, if that hero has the slightest pity for me, why does he not slay the Rakshasas with his sharp arrows ? Why does not Lakshmana rescue me at his command ? The prowess of these two princes are rare even amongst the Gods. Why are they indifferent now ? When they are indifferent towards things that they can accomplish, it seems, I am somehow guilty."

Then Hanuman said to the tearful Janaki, "I tell you the truth, and that Rama has grown indifferent to all things in grief for your absence, and the heroic Lakshmana is extremely sad at this plight of Rama. I have now found you out after great trouble, so don't give way to despair any more. To tell you the truth, your sorrows will soon be over. Rama and Lakshmana will reduce the three worlds into ashes for a sight of you. The heroic Rama will carry you back to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana with his brood. Now tell me if you have anything to communicate to Sugriva and to the other Vanaras."

Thereupon, Janaki replied, "O Messenger ! Do thou on my behalf enquire after the welfare of him who renouncing vast wealth and gems of all kinds, and a beloved wife of transcendent beauty, and bowing down

at the feet of his parents followed his elder brother to the forest; he who looked upon me as his mother and honoured his elder brother as his father, who could not understand anything about my abduction before, and who is dearer to Rama than myself, who is, in all respects, like my worshipful father-in-law, who is not afraid of any arduous feat, who is sweet-speeched and exceedingly beautiful, for whom Rama has forgotten the grief for his father, enquire after his welfare on my behalf. May he remove all my sufferings. O Messenger! Thou art at the root of success, and Rama will look upon you with affection and love for your endeavours. Tell him again and again that I shall live only for two months. I tell you the truth, that after the expiry of two months, I won't keep up my life. The vicious Ravana has imprisoned me with insult, and as Vishnu rescued the earth from the nether region, so let him rescue me from here."

Then Sita taking an excellent jewel from her head and making it over to Hanuman said, "O hero! After your return, hand over this ornament of the head to Rama."

Then Hanuman taking that token in his hand tried to fix it on his finger,[1] but was afraid of discovery on account of the brilliance of the jewel. After that Hanuman bowing unto Janaki and going round her, stood by her side. He was exceedingly delighted at the sight of Sita and ever thought of Rama and Lakshmana in his mind. He was glad as one becomes delighted in breathing bracing air high up on the hill, and he was about to start with the gem.

1 Another reading has, 'But it did not enter into it.'

CHAPTER XXVIII

SITA'S WORDS

Thereupon Janaki said, "O Messenger! This token is not unknown to Rama. He will at once remember me, my mother and king Dasaratha at the sight of it. O hero! It seems Rama will engage you in future for my rescue. If you are commissioned for it, listen to me how the task can be accomplished, how the sufferings can be over, how my troubles may be ended. Think of it and decide the course of action."

Agreeing to these words of Janaki, Hanuman was about to start after greeting her duly. At this, Janaki burst forth choked with tears, "O hero, after your return enquire after the welfare of Rama and Lakshmana, and of Sugriva with his counsellors and of other aged Vanaras. Let Rama do that, so that my sufferings may end, and that I may get over this sea of trouble while I am still alive. O hero! Do thou reap righteousness by helping him with mere words. Rama is highly energetic; he will surely display his heroism to rescue me if he hears everything." Then Hanuman folding his hands over his head said, "O worshipful lady! Rama will soon arrive here surrounded by the Vanaras and the Bhallukas and remove all the pangs of grief by destroying the enemies in battle. When he discharges his shafts, none can stand before him. He will challenge Suryya,[1] Indra and Death for you and will conquer the whole of the world surrounded by the

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1 Suryya literally means the sun, but here a distinction has been made between what we call the sun and the presiding deity of the sun, which is a flaming mass of matter. The presiding deity is like the soul that inhabits the body.

oceans." Janaki heard with respect all what Hanuman had said, and finding him ready to start, looked at him repeatedly.

Then, out of her love for Rama, she again addressing Hanuman said, "If you wish, you may keep yourself in hiding in some secret place at least for a day and remove the fatigue of your journey and start tomorrow. To tell you the truth, my sorrows are assuaged at your sight. Various kinds of misgivings now disturb my mind. I have grave suspicion about your coming back to this place, the passage to which is so arduous and difficult. But it will be difficult to sustain my life unless you come back. I am suffering untold misery ; now your absence will pain me more. O hero ! I don't know how the two princes, the Vanaras and the Bhallukas will cross this sea so hard to cross. In the three worlds only you and Vinata's son, Garuda, have the power of crossing the sea. You are intelligent and mighty. I admit that you can alone accomplish the deed, and can win arduous fame, but it will be proper for Rama to come with his army and destroy the enemies. If he rescues me by overrunning Lanka with the Vanara host, then it will be worthy of him. O messenger ! Now you should devise means so that the great hero may display his valour."

Hanuman then replied to Janaki's reasonable words, "O worshipful lady ! Sugriva is devoted to truth and he has taken vow of your rescue. The Vanaras are all warlike and obedient to him. They are of quick pace like the flight of thought ! They never lag behind in

daring deeds They have travelled over the earth various times with wind-like speed. Under the Kapichief there are Vanaras superior to me and other like myself, but there is none inferior to me. Not to speak of those Vanaras, you find only a weak and humble Vanara like myself before you The best men are not engaged in such works, only persons of inferior merits are despatched on such duties. So give up your sorrows. The best of the Kapis will cross the ocean by leaping and arrive at Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana on my back, like the sun and the moon risen at the same time, will arrive here. They will reduce Lanka to ruins, destroy Ravana with his brood and take you back to Ayodhya. Be comforted and count your days. And I assure you that you will soon behold Rama blazing like fire."

Hanuman then to start again observed, "O worshipful lady ! You will soon witness Rama and Lakshmana at the gate of Lanka, and the Vanaras, whose sharp nails and teeth are like weapons and who can defeat even the tiger and the lion by their strength and valour, will soon be here, and the Vanara army will set up heroic roars in evidence of their eagerness for fight. O lady ! Rama is grief-stricken for your absence and there is no peace in his mind Don't shed tears, let no fear find any place in thy heart on any occasion You will be reunited with Rama, like Sachi with Indra. Where is a greater hero than Rama or Lakshmana ? They are like fire in their energy and in agility like the wind. Those two heroes are your protectors, and you won't have to remain long in this dreary region of the Rakshasas.

Rama will soon arrive ; wait so long I do not return to him."

Thereupon, Janaki said for her own good, "O messenger ! You are sweet-speeched and I have been so much delighted by your sight as the thirsty sun-burnt earth at the advent of the rains. Devise some ways and means so that, with this body emaciated in grief, I may get a touch of Rama's person. Show this water-born gem to Rama and mention to him how he destroyed one eye of Indra's son, the crow, by Brahma *Astra* in anger. Besides these two remembrancers, tell him on my behalf and in my words, 'My lord, My Tilaka having been wiped off, you painted another one beside my cheek with red arsenic. Why being mighty as Indra or Varuna. dost thou now disregard the ravished Sita fallen into the midst of the Rakshasas ? This jewel of my crown I have preserved with care in my misfortune. I sustain myself by its sight, as I used to cheer up myself in my sorrowful moments by your sight. Now I send it as my token to it, but if you do not come here soon, I will put an end to my life. O lord ! It is for you, that I have been suffering all these sorrows, these harsh words and company of the Rakshasas. I shall preserve my life for two months more, and if you do not come within that time I shall surely renounce my life The wicked Ravana is cruel, he looks upon me with lustful eyes, and if there be delay on your part I shall then surely put an end to myself."

Then Hanuman, hearing the speech to tearful Janaki, resumed, "O worshipful lady ! I swear that Rama

is indifferent about everything. The heroic Lakshmana too is sorrowfully passing his days seeing this change in Rama. Now with great difficulty I have found thee out. Don't give way to despair. Rama will soon remove your sorrows. Rama and Lakshmana, eager to see you, will reduce the three worlds into ashes. The great hero, Rama, will carry thee to Ayodhya after destroying Ravana with his followers. O worshipful lady! Give me some other token that Rama may instantly recognise, and that will be greatly delightful to him"

Thereupon Janaki said, "O Messenger, I have given you the best token. Rama will fondly look at it and believe your words." Then Hanuman prepared to start after greeting Janaki. At this Janaki said with tearful eyes, "O messenger, ask on my behalf about the welfare of Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva with his counsellors. Ask Rama kindly to rescue me without delay. Tell him about my sorrows and the harsh reproaches of the Rakshasis. What shall I say more? May you now safely return."

After taking leave from Janaki, Hanuman thought, "I have found out Janaki, I have hardly any other object for coming here. The only thing that remains, is to ascertain the power of the enemy, but that must not be done by gifts, etc., but by punishment. A treaty with Rakshasas will be of no use, gifts will not prevail over wealth; nor is it easy to sow dissensions amongst Rakshasas proud of their prowess, so it is expedient to resort to might. Without this I do not see any other way of ascertaining their strength. Besides, if the

Rakshasas meet with defeat at my hand, Ravana's ardour in the future fight will surely be damped. Though king Sugriva has not given me any direction about it, no guilt attaches to the envoy who after accomplishing his main object does something else. I have found out Janaki now, and if I can gather some thing important concerning our own strength and that of the enemy in battle, then his mission will be complete in every respect. How will my arrival be a precursor of good? How can their real strength be ascertained? This day I shall see Ravana with his ministers and followers, and then shall I be able easily to ascertain his real motive and strength. After this I shall return from this place.

"This Asoka garden is full of trees and creepers and is pleasant to the eyes like the celestial garden of Nandana. I shall destroy this garden as fire reduces dry logs into ashes. Certainly, Ravana will be greatly enraged at this, and will appear on the scene with his army. Then I shall fight against the formidable Rakshasas and after destroying them shall return to Sugriva." After deciding this, Hanuman began to break down the Asoka woods in anger, and felled down trees with great violence, as if uprooted by the force of the wind. Then the birds began to cry in fear, the coppery leaves of the forest became tarnished, summits of the sporting hills were crushed, waters of the tanks and pools were agitated, and the trees were levelled to the ground. The denizens of the garden began to run to and fro in all directions. And the Asoka forest was divested of its

beauty like that of a burnt-down forest, and it then appeared like an intoxicated damsel whose cloth had slipped from her body. In fact, Asoka garden was in a wretched plight at the hand of Hanuman. Hanuman then climbed the gate of the garden to fight single-handed with odds.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FIRST CLASH

The Rakshasis of Lanka got frightened at the sound of the breaking of the trees and the cries of birds. Beasts and birds were running in every direction, and there were evil portents everywhere. Many of the Rakshasis had been asleep. On awaking they found Hanuman seated upon the arch of the garden gate after the destruction of the Asoka forest.

At that time, Hanuman grew quite formidable and fearful at the sight of the Rakshasis. Thereupon the panick-stricken Rakshasis questioned Janaki about it, "O Janaki! Who is this Vanara? Whose spy is he? Whence and why has he come? Why were you talking with him? O large-eyed beauty, do not be afraid, please tell us what the Vanara has told you."

Then Janaki replied, "How is it possible for me to read the motives of the Rakshasas, capable of assuming different forms at will? You know best who is that Vanara and what is his object. Some Rakshasa has come here assuming this guise. This is all that I have understood and I have been greatly frightened by it."

Then the Rakshasis hurriedly ran away from that place. Some of them appeared before Ravana and said, "O Rakshasa king! A dreadful Vanara is seated upon the gate. We earnestly asked Janaki, but she did not wish to disclose the identity of the Vanara. The Vanara has destroyed your Asoka garden He is a spy of either Indra or Kuvera, or Rama has sent him to know the whereabouts of Sita. However, that strange Vanara has destroyed your Asoka woods He has destroyed everything, but has not touched even the shadow of the tree under which Janaki is seated. The object of sparing that tree might be either the safety of Janaki, or the fatigue of the Vanara. But there is no question of his fatigue. He has certainly spared Janaki. The only tree he has spared, is the great leafy Sinsapa tree under which Janaki sits Just punish him severely. He has destroyed your pleasure-garden. Sita has captivated your heart and who else except him who has no love for his life dares to talk to her?"

At this news Ravana was inflamed with rage, as a funeral pyre leaps into flame. Tears rolled down his eyes as drops of oil fall from a burning wick Then he at once sent his warlike servants to secure Hanuman. At his command eighty thousand servants set out equipped with maces and mallets. They eagerly proceeded to capture Hanuman.

At that time Hanuman was waiting at the gate, determined for the fight. The Rakshasas came before him as moths drawn by the glare of a flame. Some of them were armed with clubs, some with lances, some

with Pattishes, some with shafts, some with Argalas, some with Prosas and some with Taunaras. At their sight Hanuman, huge as a mountain, began to lash his tail repeatedly on the ground and roared like a lion. He began to beat his tail on the ground filling the city of Lanka with its noise. The birds fell down from the sky at its clapping sound. Hanuman became quite restive with the ardour for fight. He proclaimed from the top of his voice, "Victory to Rama, to Lakshmana and to Sugriva. I am the son of the Wind god. I am the servant of Rama, king of Ayodhya, and my name is Hanuman. When I shall hurl down stones, thousands of Ravanas will not be my match. All the Rakshasas will witness today that I shall go away after destroying Lanka and greeting Janaki afterwards."

Then the Rakshasas were greatly frightened at the terrible roar of Hanuman. They saw him above, hanging like an evening cloud. He was ever uttering Rama's name, so they became fully convinced that he was an emissary of Rama. Then they surrounded him with dreadful weapons. Being thus besieged by the enemies on all sides Hanuman took off a huge bolt from the gate and attacked them with that, and like Indra engaged in the destruction of the Asuras he began to slay them by that bolt. Sometimes with the bolt in his hand, he appeared like Garuda ranging in the sky. After the death of those servants Hanuman again sat upon the gate for further fight.

Then the survivors beat a hasty retreat and informed Ravana about the destruction of his servants at the

hand of the Vanara. At this Ravana burned with rage and addressing Jamvumali, son of Prahasta, said, "O hero! Get yourself ready to set out for battle without further delay."

CHAPTER XXX

JAMVUMALI'S PLIGHT

After the destruction of the servants[1], Hanuman thought within himself, "I have distroyed the pleasure-garden, now I shall demolish that high temple[2] like the cliff of the Sumeru mountain." Thus resolving in his mind he stood up with a bound. At that time he shone like the Sun in effulgence. He broke down the temple by his strength and after expanding his body he began to strike his arms.[3] Its sounds filled Lanka with thundering echoes and the sentries of the temple fainted in fear. In the meantime Hanuman declared at the top of his voice, "Victory to Rama, Lakshmana and to Sugriva, protected by Rama. I am a servant of Rama and my name is Hanuman. The Rakshasas will witness me this day to return after the destruction of Lanka."

Hanuman thus set up terrible roars and the keepers of the temple rushed towards him with various weapons

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1 Retinue of Ravana.—T.

2 *Chaityaprasad* means a building designed for deities.—T.

3 By way of challenge as wrestlers do when they challenge their rivals in the wrestling ground.—T.

from all sides. And as they began to strike from all sides, they resembled a whirlpool of the Ganges. Thereupon Hanuman broke down a huge pillar, ornamented with gold and a hundred borders, and began to whirl it in great speed. Fire was produced by the friction of the pillar and the whole place was set ablaze by that fire. In the meantime Hanuman slew a number of Rakshasas by hurling down stones and trees. Seeing the palace burning, Hanuman addressing them from above said, "You see, there are many like me in the service of Sugriva. They are ranging over the earth at Sugriva's command. Of them, some have the strength of ten elephants and some possess the strength of a thousand elephants Some have the speed of the wind and some are quite irresistible For your destruction the king of the Kapis will soon come here followed by a vast number of followers like me When you have incurred enmity with Rama none of the Rakshasas and nothing of Lanka will survive."

Here at the command of Ravana Jamvumali set out for battle. He had a red cloth on and a red garland on his neck and he wore decent ear rings. His eyes were ever revolving. He was urconquerable and haughty and he bent a vast bow like that of Indra, filling all quarters with a thundering sound by the twang of his bow.

Hanuman was then seated on the arch of the gate. Seeing Jamvumali coming in a chariot driven by the asses, Hanuman began to roar in delight. Then a fierce fight ensued between the two. Jamvumali aimed hundred

sharp arrows at Hanuman, and he hit Hanuman's face with two crescents ; head with one Karni, and the two arms with ten Narachas. Hanuman's face was by nature red and being smitten with arrows it grew crimsoned like a big red lotus blooming by the rays of the autumnal sun. He was extremely enraged at this, and he took up a huge stone that lay by him and hurled it with great violence. Thereupon Jamvumali pierced him with ten shafts in great anger. Hanuman finding that huge stone thrown in vain, uprooted a mighty Sala tree and began to whirl it in great speed. Thereupon, Jamvumali showered arrows upon him. He cut down the Sala tree with four arrows, and struck his arms with five shafts and pierced his chest and nipple with ten arrows. Then Hanuman greatly expanded his body, and being exceedingly enraged took up that bolt and hurled it in great violence against his enemy's breast. Jamvumali's head and thighs were crushed by that bolt ; his bows, arrows, horses and chariot and all came to an end.

Then, the Rakshasa King Ravana, was beside himself in rage at the news of Jamvumali's death. His red eyes began to revolve in rage and he immediately asked the sons of his Counsellors to meet Hanuman in fight.

Thereupon, the fiery sons of the Counsellors got themselves ready for battle. They were skilled in arms and were foremost of the warriors. Every one of them was burning with a desire for victory. Then they set out in their chariots adorned with golden net-works, decorated with pennons and flag-staffs and drawn by horses, proceeding with a deep rumbling noise. A good

still defend yourself carefully. You see there is no certainty which side will win in war. So be always on your guard."

Then the leaders of the army issued forth with fiery energy. A number of chariots, elephants, and horses followed them.

Here, Hanuman was seated upon the gate like a glaring sun. He was highly intelligent and huge in bulk and was eagerly waiting for the fight. The captains, as soon as they saw him, surrounded him on all sides and attacked him with dreadful weapons. The great hero, Durdharsha discharged five sharp shafts with golden blades like the leaves of a lotus. Being pierced by those arrows Hanuman filled the sky with his terrific roars. Then Durdharsha approached him, by showering arrows upon him. Hanuman stopped him by his roar and being smitten by his arrows, he began to increase in dimension. Then he leaped up to a great height and then fell, like lightning in violent speed on Durdharsha's chariot. Thereupon eight steeds, wheels and poles of the chariot were broken, and Durdharsha was crushed to death.

Hanuman again rose in the sky. Then Virupaksha and Yupaksha angrily approached him and hit his chest with two clubs. Hanuman resisting that blow again descended on the ground and crushed their hands uprooting a huge Sala tree from the ground.

Then the heroic Praghasa approached with a cheerful countenance. Bhasakarna too angrily came forward with a lance, Praghasa threw a Pattisha and Bhasakarna

a lance at Hanuman. Being wounded by that dart and Pattisha, Hanuman began to bleed from all his body, and then he looked red like the newly risen sun. Then he took up a mountain cliff[1] in anger and struck them with it and crushed them into atoms.

Then Hanuman became busy in attacking and destroying those surviving. He slew horse after horse and elephant after elephant. The field of battle became covered with the dead bodies of the Rakshasas, horses, elephants and broken parts of chariots. Hanuman again ascended the gate like Death himself ready to strike.

CHAPTER XXXII

PRINCE AKSHYA

Then Ravana hearing of the destruction of the heroice Captains with their carriers, cast his eyes upon prince Akshya who happened to be before him. Akshya was very eager for fight. Having got the slightest hint from Ravana, he stood up like a tongue of flame fed by clarified butter. He got upon a chariot radiant as the rising sun and embellished with a golden net-work and set out with bow plated with gold His chariot was adorned with flags (obtained by penance) and jewelled flag-staffs. Eight steeds were carrying it and it was equipped with sky-ranging arms. Eight sharp swords were suspended from golden ropes from eight points o

1 Literal interpretation does not help us in these things. If we eliminate the supernatural elements it appears something like a guerilla warfare.—Translator.

the chariot and arrows, Saktis and Tomagas, frightful as the sun and the moon, were kept in their proper places. It was unassailahle by the Gods and was bright as the lightning. Prince Akshya, mighty as a God, set out in that for fight. The heaven and the earth were filled with the echoes of the neighing of the horses, trumpets of the elephants and of the rumbling noise of the chariot. He came with his army before Hanuman. At that Hanuman shone like the doomsday fire ready to consume everything. He saw Akshya and he gazed at him with admiration and surprise. At that time prince Akshya too looked at him with the cruel stare of a lion. Considering Hanuman's impetuosity and his own prowess he glowed in valour like the sun on the expiration of a cycle of creation. Hanuman was formidable and his prowess was worthy object of sight and he signalled him to fight by throwing three shafts at him. Hanuman was proud of fight, and languor could not touch him. He was skilled in victory and prince Akshya looked at him with winkless eyes.

Then that highly-spirited hero approached Hanuman for battle. The meeting of those two worthy rivals filled the Gods and the Asuras with fear. Seeing them ready to put their prowess to proof, the sun grew dim, the wind ceased to blow, the rocks became restive, the creatures began to shriek in fear, and the sky and the sea were deeply disturbed by their fearful echoes. Prince Akshya was versed and highly skilful in fixing and discharging his arrows in battle and was a sure aim, and as his rage increased he pierced Hanuman's head with

golden shafts. Blood then flowed from Hanuman's head and his eyes began to roll. He looked like the newly risen sun.

Hanuman was glad to meet Akshya in fight and began to increase in bulk. In anger he became incapable of being stared upon like the meridian sun, and it seemed as if he would burn Akshya by the fire of his eyes, and the heroic Akshya looked like a cloud of the rainy season. His bow was shooting incessant arrows like rains upon Hanuman At this sight Hanuman roared in battle with delight. Prince Akshya was young and his nature was child-like ; he was proud of his strength, his eyes grew red with rage and he approached Hanuman hitting him incessantly with arrows as an elephant approaches a well, concealed in grass Being smitten by the arrows Hanuman set up a terrible roar, flinging out his arms and his legs, and darted into the sky with fierce energy. Prince Akshya, the Rakshasa hero, ran after him and as the clouds rain hail-stones upon the mountain, so Akshya showered incessant arrows on him. The exceedingly strong Hanuman was swift like the flight of mind, and began to range the sky behind the screen of arrows. Akshya's arrows were thus rendered futile.

Hanuman respectfully gazed at Akshya and thought of the ways of displaying his valour. In the meantime Akshya's arrow in great velocity pierced his side. Hanuman thus being smitten, set up a fiercer roar. He was skilled in battle and thought, "This hero is a boy like the newly risen sun, but he is displaying prow-

ess and valour like a mature man. He is highly skilled in battle, but yet I have no mind to slay him. He is strong, cautious, and possesses great power of endurance. The Saints, Nagas and Yakshas will be surprised by his valour. He is extremely quick and he is now casting repeated glances at me at close quarters without any fear. To speak the truth, even the Gods and the Asuras get frightened by his prowess. If I neglect him in any way surely I shall be defeated then. Besides the prowess of this hero is ever increasing, so it is better to kill him; it is in no way proper to disregard a growing flame."

Thus after discussing about the prowess of the enemy and thinking of the course of his actions, Hanuman decided to slay Akshya Hanuman smote down eight steeds of Akshya trained in various kinds of movements and capable of carrying heavy loads, and crushed the chariot with its pole and axles by one fist-blow.

Thereupon Akshya jumped upon the ground and then immediately sprang into the sky holding a sword in his hand. It seemed as if a saint was bound for heaven after casting off his body.

Then Hanuman firmly caught hold of the two legs of the hero and whirling him round and round like a snake held by the bird Garuda, dashed him on the ground with violent force. The arms, thighs, waist and chest of Akshya were at once crushed into atoms. No trace of the eyes was visible. Blood flowed in streams and prince Akshya was at once destroyed.

At this Indra and other Gods, Yakshas, Uragas, and the sages gazed upon Hanuman with admiration and astonishment. Hanuman again climbed upon the gate like Death himself ready for destruction.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FOURTH CLASH

The Rakshasa king Ravana was greatly alarmed at the news of Akshya's death. After containing himself with difficulty he spoke to Indrajit, mighty as God :

"My son ! You are the foremost of the heroes ; the Gods and the Asuras are afflicted by your prowess in battle ; the Gods have witnessed your valour and being even under the protection of Indra they could not bear thy onslaught ; you have secured divine arms by the grace of Brahma, the Lord of the creation ; only you never became fatigued in battle ; you are intelligent, you never miss any opportunity, you never ignore time and place ; you are protected by your own valour and ascetic merit. There is no impossible feat for you in the field of battle. Who is there in the three worlds that is not aware of your prowess and skill in arms ? Your valour, your spiritual powers and strength are quite worthy of you, and my mind is never down with anxiety for you thinking that you will be victorious even in an arduous fight. My boy ! The retinue have been destroyed ; Jamvumali, five captains and the sons of the Counsellors have been slain. A number of chariots, elephants and horses have been destroyed ; the heroic Mahadara and prince Akshya have also fallen. But I did not depend on them as I do upon you. Now act, taking into consideration the destruction of the troops, the prowess of the Vanara and your own strength. Do what you think best after considering the strength of your own side and that of the foe, so that the enemy may be chastised. Further I forbid you not to take any troops with you ; they are

dying by numbers at the hands of the Vanara nor use thunderbolt like arms, that fire-like Vanara is invulnerable to such weapons; his strength is unimpairable. Now think over what I have said to you and be earnest about victory in battle. You have command over several celestial arms; think of them and be careful about self-protection. It is not proper for me to send you to such a dangerous situation, but it is sanctioned by the conduct of the Kshatriyas as well as by royal polity. It is proper for a warrior to enquire in what things[1] the enemy is proficient and his efficiency in battle, and it is his duty to endeavour for victory."

Then Indrajit, mighty as a God to set out in order for battle wheeled round his father. Friends and relations present praised him repeatedly and Indrajit became eager for fight. And that effulgent son of Ravana having expansive eyes like the petals of a lotus issued forth like unto the rising of the sea during a Parva.[2] Then Indrajit of irresistible might got upon a car drawn by four horses of tremendous speed and endowed with strong, sharp teeth. That master of chariot, the foremost of bowmen, the best of the fencers, conversant with the use of all arms, soon proceeded in his car where Hanuman was. And hearing the deep rumbling noise of the car and the twang of his bow, Hanuman felt delighted at his heart. Indrajit rushed towards him with great speed. He set in battle-delight, all the quarters became dark and jackals began to cry. The Nagas,

1 Branches of learning on Shastras.—T.

2 The 8th and 14th day of each lunar month.—T.

Yakshas, Maharshis, the *Siddhyas*, the heavenly bodies and the birds gathered under the sky began to make a great noise.

Hanuman began to emit heroic roars and became dilated in rage seeing Indrajit's car, having a flag like that of Indra, approaching quickly. Indrajit held a wonderful bow, bright as lightning, and he began to flourish and stretch it, producing a deep rumbling sound like the thunder. Then began a conflict between two formidable rivals, both were strong, fearless and quick. It seemed as if the lord of the Devas[1] and the lord of the Asuras had met each other in fight

Then the great hero, Indrajit began to shot his arrows against Hanuman, and Hanuman after baffling them got into the sky and began to tread in the passage of his father, the Wind-God. Thereupon Indrajit discharged sharp, feathered arrows painted in gold, with the velocity of lightning. The field of battle was filled with the rattling sound of the chariot and with the sound of bugles, drums and twangs of the bow. Hanuman again got into the sky, and he would at first stand before the arrows and then as soon as they were discharged, he would soar in the sky and would move beyond the range of those arrows. Both were quick, both were heroic, and one became unbearable to the other. Seeing the enemy thus unhurt though aimed at with infallible arrows Indrajit began to think. He found that Hanu-

1 Suras and Asuras represented two rival branches of the Aryan people and there was continual hostility between the two sections, and victory was sometimes on this side and sometimes on the other.—T.

man could not be slain, so he began to think of some means by which he could be bound. He then discharged the weapon given to him by Brahma, not to kill Hanuman but to bind him down. Thus Hanuman's hands and feet were bound, and he became motionless and fell on the ground. Though bound up by the weapon, of Brahma, he depended upon the grace of Brahma, and thought of the formers blessings towards him. He thought it was impossible to free himself from the bondage of that weapon of Brahma, the lord of the creation. So he must endure it for some time. Hanuman then recollected Brahma's boons towards him and realised that he would be soon set free. Thinking all this, he respectfully submitted to the chastisement of Brahma. He further recollected, "Brahma, Indra and the Wind-God are ever protecting me. Therefore I am lying here in bondage without any fear. Now it will be of great advantage to me if the Rakshasas now take me in, for I shall then be able to talk to Ravana. So let the enemies take me now without any further delay."

Then the Rakshasas secured him by force and used various abusive expressions towards him. Hanuman gave up all efforts and began to groan. Then the Rakshasas began to bind him firmly with ropes spun from jute and the bark of trees. Hanuman thought, "If Ravana would like to see me out of curiosity, then my object will be attained." Thus thinking he bore the pain of bondage and the abuses.

In the meantime, he was suddenly released from the bondage by the blessings of Brahma. Then Hanuman was beaten by the dreadfully strong-fisted Rakshasas.

Ravana was seated in the Assembly-hall surrounded by the ministers and the courtiers, when Indrajit appeared before him taking Hanuman with him. Hanuman looked like an infuriated elephant tied in chains. On seeing him the Rakshasas repeatedly asked, "Who is this Vanara? Whose son is he? Whence and why has he come? At whose assurance has he become so fearless?"

Many angrily remarked, "Kill this villain instantly." "Burn him, devour him," cried out some. Then the grim-visaged Rakshasas began to drag Hanuman to and fro The spirited Hanuman then beheld Ravana seated in a jewelled room with old counsellors at his feet. His eyes were rolling in anger and at the sight of Hanuman he beckoned his counsellors—well-behaved and born of highly respectable families—to ascertain his identity and they interrogated Hanuman at whose instance he had come and his object of coming to Lanka. Hanuman replied, "I am an emissary of Sugriva, the lord of the Kapis, and have come here at his command."

CHAPTER XXXIV

IN THE PRESENCE OF RAVANA

Ravana, the Rakshasa lord, was seated in the royal assembly-hall. His golden diadem was studded with pearls and his person was adorned with diamonds and precious gems. He was smeared with red sandal paste, and he wore a very costly piece of silk. His eyes were red and dreadful, his teeth were firm and white, and his lips were hanging. As the Mandara shines with its summits, so he appeared exceedingly beautiful with his ten heads. His hue was of collyrium-blue, and he had a gold

chain on his breast. He looked like a mass of clouds tinged by the rays of the sun. His arms were smeared with sandal paste and adorned with Angada, that looked like a penta-headed snake. His seat was made of crystal, wrought with gems, and covered with a sheet. A number of beautiful damsels were fanning him with chowris.

Durdhara, Prahasta, Mahaparsha and Nikumbha—those four counsellors—were seated at a short distance from him, while other counsellors of beautiful appearance were consoling him with their assurances.

Hanuman smarting under the bondage, in great astonishment gazed at him with red-hot eyes. Being dazed by Ravana's effulgence, Hanuman mused within his mind, "O, how beautiful is this hero! What patience, what strength, what beauty and what auspicious marks does he possess! If he were not vicious, then he could have been the protector of heaven, nay even of Indra. But his acts are cruel and ugly, this is why even the Gods and the Asuras are frightened by his sight. This hero being angry can reduce the earth into sea."

Seeing the spirited Hanuman before him, Ravana grew restive There were many misgivings in his mind, and he thought, "Is he the worshipful Nandi[1] who being angry at my jeering at him cursed me in the Kailasa, has come here in the form of a Vanara, or is he Vana himself, the King of the Asuras?"

Thus debating in his mind, Ravana with red-hot

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1 An attendant of Siva, whom Ravana formerly laughed at for his monkey-like face.—T.

eyes said to Prahasta, "Ask that villain whence and why he has come here. What is the reason of his breaking the trees? My city is quite inaccessible; why has he entered it? What is the cause of his fight with the Rakshasas?"

Thereupon, Prahasta at the command of Ravana told Hanuman, "Take heart, O Vanara. Tell the truth: Has not Indra sent you to this city of Lanka? Don't be afraid, you will be immediately set at liberty. Tell me whether you are an emissary of Kuvera, Yama or Varuna? Have you entered the city at their directions secretly by assuming the form of a Vanara? Or has Vishnu ever longing for victory sent you here? You only look like a Vanara, but in valour you are not like one of the race of the Vanaras. Tell the truth, and you will at once be set free. But if you tell lies, you will be put to death."

Then Hanuman said to Ravana, "I am not a secret spy of Indra, Yama or Varuna, I have no friendship with Kuvera, nor has Lord Vishnu set me hither. I am a real Vanara and belong to the race of the Vanaras. I have come here just to have a sight of you but finding it difficult to get access to you, I have destroyed the pleasure garden. Then the Rakshasas came to fight with me and I fought against them for self-defence. On account of the boon from Brahma, even the Gods and the Asuras cannot bind me, but I have suffered myself thus to be tied down just for having a sight of you. And the Rakshasas have brought me in your presence. I am a messenger of the heroic Rama and listen to what I say for your own good."

"O King! I have come to you at the command of Sugriva, the Lord of the Kapis. That Sugriva enquires after your welfare. Listen what he has communicated to you for your good in this world as well as in the next."

"In Ayodhya there was a King named Dasaratha. He ruled over the subjects as their father. Rama is his eldest son, and he with his brother, Lakshmana, and his wife, Janaki, came to the Dandaka forest at the command of his father. The pious Rama missed his wife in Janasthana. In the course of his search for Janaki, Rama with Lakshmana arrived at the Rishyamuka hill and became acquainted with Sugriva. Sugriva promised to find out the whereabouts of Janaki and Rama too promised to confer the Vanara kingdom on him. Then slaying Vali with one shaft, Rama gave Sugriva the lordship over the Vanaras and the Bhallukas, O Rakshasa Chief, you know Vali very well, and Rama slew him with a single shaft."

"Then Sugriva eager for the search of Janaki, sent the Vanaras in various directions. Host of Vanaras are seaching for Janaki on land and air. Of them, some are like Garuda in speed and some are irresistible as the wind. For Janaki, I have crossed hundred Yojanas of the sea and have come here to see you. I am begotten of the Wind-God and my name is Hanuman. While wandering forth hither and thither I beheld Janaki in your place. You are cognisant of righteousness, you covet for wealth and have secured plenty through your ascetic powers. So it is not proper for you to confine another's wife. An intelligent person like you is never

engaged in acts which are unjust and injurious. O king! There is none in the three worlds who can be happy by incurring hostility with Rama. The Gods and the Asuras cannot stand before the arrows, shot by Rama and Lakshmana in anger. So listen to my words conducive to your good for all times and return Janaki to Rama. I have met with Janaki here. It is difficult to have a sight of her. I have seen her and Rama will do the rest. Janaki is afflicted with sorrow, and you know not that she is residing in your place like a penta-headed snake (for your destruction). You see, as one cannot digest poison by his power of assimilating food, so it is not at all easy even for the Gods and the Asuras to hush up everything by confining her in secrecy.

"By virtue of religious penances, you have acquired long life and divine prosperity, but you should not spoil that merit by marrying another's wife. It is for your virtue that you are incapable of being destroyed by the Gods and the Asuras. But Sugriva, the King of the Kapis is not a God, Yaksha, or a Rakshasa, by race he is a Vanara and Rama is a human being. Tell me how you will protect yourself from them. Happiness is the reward of virtue. It is seldom possible to enjoy happiness along with pain of the fruit of vice, nor can former virtue nullify subsequent vice. O king, you have enjoyed sufficient happiness in the past. Now you will have to suffer immensely. Many a Rakshasa has lost life in Janasthana. The great hero Vali has fallen on the field of battle, and Rama has contracted friendship with Sugriva. Now just think what may be good for you. You see, I can alone destroy the

city of Lanka with its elephants and horses, but Rama has not given me any direction for it. He would himself destroy the abductor of his wife,—thus he swore before the Vanara and the Bhallukas. King of the Rakshasas! You are only an ordinary person. Even Indra himself can't be happy by incurring hostility with Rama. She, whom you know to be Janaki and who is confined in your abode, is the fatal Night that forebodes destruction to Lanka! Don't have that noose of Death in the form of Sita round your neck. Do thou rather think of thy welfare. You will soon find Lanka on flames fed by thy wrath of Rama and consumed by the energy of Sita. Don't bring ruin for your own fault upon your sons, wives, counsellors and friends. Don't lose immense wealth. I am by race a Vanara. I am an emissary and servant of Rama. What I tell you is true; listen to my words. The heroic Rama can recreate the world after destroying it. His prowess is like that of Vishnu. None amongst the Gods, Asuras, Yakshas, Uragas, Vidyadharas, Gandharvas, Siddhyas, Kinnaras or amongst beasts and birds can be his match. It will be extremely difficult for you to save your life after doing harm to him, the lord of the three worlds and the king of kings. There is none in the three worlds who can challenge him in battle; neither Brahma himself, nor Rudra, the destroyer of Tripura, nor Indra, the king of Gods, can stand before his shaft."

CHAPTER XXXV

RAVANA'S REPLY

Then Ravana, the king of the Rakshasas, became greatly enraged at these words of Hanuman. His red-hot eyes began to roll, and he at once ordered the executioners to put Hanuman to death. Hanuman was an envoy and Vibhishana could not approve of his death sentence. But Ravana was beside himself in rage and finding the death of an envoy almost imminent, Vibhishana began to reflect what was to be done to pacify his worshipful elder brother. He then said, "O Lord! Please stop. Kindly listen to my words. Those kings who can judge about the gravity and levity of acts never intend to put envoys to death. This is against righteousness and custom, so it is not at all proper for you. You are virtuous, wise and well-versed in politics. If a man like you is swayed by anger, mastery over the Shastras and all toil in order to attain it, are in vain. Be pleased and consider what is right and wrong."

Then Ravana enraged with Vibhishana's words said, "O hero! There is no sin in putting a sinful person to death, so I shall immediately put him to death."

Hearing those unjust words of Ravana, Vibhishana with sound words began, "O king, be propitious; listen to my just and well-meaning words. My Lord! An envoy is not to be put to death at the time of discharging his duties. True, he is a formidable enemy, and much mischief has been committed by him, yet none will approve of his death. Whipping, disfiguring the body, or shaving the head (by way of insult), all these punishments have been sanctioned towards the envo

but, we have never heard of the sentence of death being passed upon an envoy. Your goal is righteousness, you can fully judge what is good or bad. So anger is indeed reprehensible in a person like you. Those who are wise never indulge in angry passion. Neither in religious discussion nor in social customs, nor in the right interpretation of the Shastras, there is any who can approach you. O hero! You are, in truth, the foremost amongst the Gods and the Asuras. You will reap the fruit by putting the Vanara to death. You should punish him who has sent him hither. You see, this Vanara has been sent by another person; he has come with another's words, he is not independent; hence it is not proper to put him to death. O king! If this one is slain, no other sky-ranger would come[1] to Lanka. So you should not put him to death. Rather slay Indra and other Gods; that will immensely prove your prowess. Besides, those two human princes are haughty and hostile to you, and if this Vanara is put to death, who will incite them to battle? I don't find any one else. At this moment, the Rakshasas are impatient to display their valour, don't disappoint them by putting obstacles to it. They are ever obedient servants and always think of your welfare. They are devoted to you and are intent upon your well-being; born of high families, they are the foremost of the warriors. Surely, having those fiery heroes on your side, the glory of victory will be yours. So let a section of the force march this day under your orders

1 Another reading :—"I don't see any other who can arrive at this city of Lanka."—T.

and bring those foolish princes here. It is desirable on all hands to show your valour to your enemy."

Thereupon, the lord of the Rakshasas, the potent enemy of the celestials, accepted the excellent words of his younger brother.

CHAPTER XXXVI

LANKA IN FLAMES

Hearing those well-meaning words of Vibhishana Ravana said, "O hero! You have said what is right; it is improper to kill an envoy, but it has become expedient to punish him somehow. You see the tail is dear to the Vanaras and it is their ornament, so burn it soon. When he will return with the burnt tail[1], his friends and acquaintances will find him disfigured and crest-fallen." Thus awarding this sentence to Hanuman, addressing the Rakshasas Ravana said, "Soon set fire to the tail of this Vanara, when his tail will be on flames carry him on shoulders all over the city."

Thereupon, at the command of Ravana, the angry Rakshasas began to wrap his tail with torn cotton fabrics. In the meantime, Hanuman began to be dilated, as fire grows in volume fed by dried woods of forest. The Rakshasas then sprinkled oil over his tail and set fire to it. Hanuman grew angry and began to strike the Rakshasas with his flaming tail. Then Rakshasas began to bind Hanuman. Then, all the Rakshasas—old,

1 Evidently it refers to a monkey of Simia Sinica species. The general conviction, however, is that Hanuman is not an ape or monkey. The probability is grea that he was a man.—T.

young, male and female—became exceedingly glad at that sight. Then Hanuman thought, "Though I am in bondage now, yet the Rakshasas won't be able to stand my might. I shall tear off this bondage and kill all of them. They have bound me at the command of the wicked Ravana but they could not deal with me adequately for the wrong I have done for the benefit of Rama. To tell the truth, I can alone destroy all the Rakshasas, but Rama will do it himself. So I should suffer this bondage for some time. Now let the Rakshasas range Lanka with me. At night, I could not see inaccessible places; I shall see them in course of this. Let the Rakshasas bind me. I am suffering no doubt from the burning of my tail, but my mind is not any way overcome."

Then, the Rakshasas in great delight took Hanuman in their custody and proclaimed about the punishment by blowing conch-shells and trumpets. Hanuman, carried on their backs, saw with delight variegated cars, enclosed courtyards, well-laid terraces, streets thronged with edifices, crossings, bye-ways and the interiors of dwellings. The Rakshasas proclaimed him as a spy all along the high-ways and public roads.

In the meantime, the ugly-looking Rakshasis went to Janaki and said, "The Rakshasas have set fire to the tail of the red-face Vanara with whom you were talking, and he is being dragged along through different streets."

Thereupon, Janaki grew extremely sad at this unpleasant news, and praying with devoutness to the Fire that burnt closed to her, she said, "If I have ever served my husband, if I am chaste, if I have any

religious merit, if I have been the devoted wife of one alone, then prove yourself cool to Hanuman."

Thereupon that Fire began to burn in flames bending towards the right, and the fire burning in Hanuman's tail grew soothing and cool as snow. Then Hanuman mused, "Fire is burning in my tail, but why does it not burn my body? Its flame is intensely glowing, yet why do I not feel any pain? Why does contact of fire at the end of my tail feel cool as snow? I can easily discern that it is due to Rama's prowess. It is due to his prowess that I found the Mainaka in the midst of the sea when I crossed it. If the sea and the hill Mainaka could have behaved like that for Rama, there is no wonder that Fire will appear cool as snow. However, it is for Janaki's affection, Rama's valour and for Fire's friendship with my father, that he is not burning me."

Hanuman again thought, "What! Low fellows like the Rakshasas to bind one like me at last? If I have any prowess at all, I should teach them a proper lesson." Thinking thus, the great hero snapped his bonds and with one mighty spring got upon the high gate—lofty as a cliff. There was no crowd of the Rakshasas at that place. Getting there, he contracted his body within a moment, and the remaining of his bonds spontaneously slipped from him. He again grew tall. Eyeing and casting his glance around hither and thither and round, he saw a huge bolt standing against the gate. Taking that iron bolt in his hand he destroyed the sentries there. His tail was blazing at that time and he looked like the glaring sun quite incapable of being gazed at and he repeatedly cast his looks upon Lanka.

Hanuman then glowed with energy and thought, "What remains to be done? How shall I punish the Rakshasas more? I have broken the pleasure-garden, destroyed the Rakshasa heroes and also a part of the army. Now destruction of the forts remains and when it is done, my labours will he crowned with success. By further slight efforts it will be accomplished. Fire is burning on my tail, and I shall propitiate it by burning the houses."

Thereupon, the mighty Vanara with his burning tail, resembling a cloud with lightning, began to range with undaunted heart from house to house, from palace to palace, from garden to garden. Then the hero springing with the velocity of wind set fire to the house of Prahasta. At a short distance from it was Mahaparsha's dwelling and he jumped over it. The house began to burn as if with the doomsday-fire. Then Hanuman, darting up, set fire to the dwellings of Vajradanshtra, Suka, Sarana, Indrajit, Jamvumali, Rasmiketu, Surya-Shatru, Hrawskarma, Danshtra, Ramasha, Yodhanmatta, Matta, Dhvajagriva, Vidyutjihva, Ghora, Hastimukha, Karala, Vishala, Shonitaksha, Kumbhakarna, Makaraksha, Narantaka, Kumbha, Nikumbha, Yajna-Shatru and Brahma-Shatru. In succession he burnt all the houses leaving that of Vibhishana alone. The mansions of those Rakshasas were reared with great costs and they were reduced to ashes with their immense wealth. Gradually Hanuman approached the royal palace.

It was high as the Mandara hill and adorned with jewels and Hanuman having set fire to it by his flaming tail, began to roar like a cloud that might rise on the

day of dissolution. And that fire being fed by the wind began to spread on all sides, and at that time it seemed as if doomsday fire was going to reduce everything to ashes. Then big mansions wrought with pearls and gems and furnished with golden nets began to crumble down, as if the Siddhas were falling down from the heaven at the expiry of their religious reward. Groans and shrieks rose from all sides and the Rakshasas gave up in despair all attempts to save their wealth and properties and ran out of their dwellings. It seemed as if Agni or the God of fire came in the guise of a Vanara. Women, with sucking babies on their breasts, tumbled down into flame with tearful eyes, some were surrounded on all sides by the tongues of fire, and hairs of some were dishevelled and those fair damsels, when they fell looked like bright lightning darting from the sky.

Hanuman saw various kinds of metals mixed up with diamonds, pearls, corals and lapis streaming down like liquids by the heat of that fire. As fire is never satiated by burning dry logs and grass, so Hanuman was not at all satisfied by the destruction of the Rakshasas, and Hanuman looked like God Rudra burning down Tripura. The flame of that terrific fire ascended to the summit of the Trikuta Mountain on which Lanka did rest. Its flames were sootless and kissed the sky ; it covered Lanka, with the glare of million suns, and rent the earth with thundering sounds. The tongues of flame were exceedingly red like the Kinsuka blossoms, and clouds of smoke rising out of extinguished flame resembled blue in hue. The Rakshasas were greatly frightened by this and began to talk amongst themselves. "Either he is

the thunder-bolt-armed Indra, or Yama, or Varuna or the Wind-God, or fire generated by the third eye of Rudra, or Suryya (Sun) or Chandra (Moon) or Kuvera. This is no Vanara but Death himself, or this Rakshasa-destroying fire is Brahma himself, the great Sire of all and the Disposer of all destinies. Or is this Vishnu's energy, incomprehensible, unutterable, infinite that has assumed this form by virtue of Maya ?[1] Seeing the City thus consumed with its residents, houses, horses, cars, beasts, birds and trees, the Rakshasas began to lament: "O father! O son! O love! O friend! O my love! O my husband! Alas! All virtue has come to an end." Thus lamenting, the Rakshasas created a great row. And Lanka surrounded by flames, with her heroes fallen, looked like the world burning with the fire of Brahma, or like an object blighted by the imprecation of a curse.

Then Hanuman saw the panic-stricken Rakshasas and after burning Lanka he thought of Rama.

Then, the Gods praised Hanuman, and the Saints, Gandharvas and the Vidyadharas were mightily pleased with his deed. Hanuman took his seat on the roof of a palace. He then glowed like the sun. After accomplishing his object, he extinguished the fire of his tail with the waters of the sea.

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1 Maya is neither illusion, nor magic, as is often wrongly interpreted; it is the materialising energy of God, *i.e.*, the physical basis of the manifested world of the senses.—Translator.

CHAPTER XXXVII

HANUMAN'S ANXIETY

After the burning of Lanka, Hanuman began to reflect and grew highly apprehensive and thought, "What an iniquitous act have I committed by burning down Lanka. Blessed are those high-souled people who can control their angry passions by dint of their good sense, like fire quenched by water. What evil cannot be effected by anger? An angry person can even kill the worshipful and vilify the pious with rude expressions. The angry cannot decide what to speak and what not to speak. There is no sin that cannot be committed by them. He is a real man who can cast off his anger as the snakes cast off their sloughs. O shame to me! I am vicious, shameless and the perpetrator of a great crime and the destroyer of my master. Without thinking of Janaki I have burnt down Lanka. If the whole of Lanka has been burnt down, certainly Janaki has been consumed with it. Alas! I have unwittingly spoilt my master's cause. I have defeated his object. By burning down Lanka I have not saved Janaki. The burning of Lanka is no doubt trifling, but in my anger I have lost my great object. Forsooth, Janaki has been consumed by fire, for I do not find any spot in the whole city that has not been devastated by fire. Due to my stupidity I have defeated my master's object. Now, I shall enter either into flames or into the sea, full of sharks and crocodiles, and I shall offer my body to them. I have spoilt the whole thing. With what face shall I now appear before Sugriva, Rama and Lakshmana? It is notorious in the three worlds that a Vanara is fickle

and restless, and I have betrayed my national character through anger. Fie on activity born of impetuous passion, which is the cause of all rashness and incompetency! Alas! Though capable, yet I did not protect Sita. I have through my culpable passion furnished an illustration of the reckless monkey-nature which is notorious over the three worlds. On Sita's destruction both (Rama and Lakshmana) will cease to live and on their death Sugriva will die with his friends. And on receiving these news how will Bharata, devoted to his brother, and Satrughna live? Thus the Ikshwaku race being extinct, all the people will be overwhelmed with grief. I have, therefore, due to my bad luck, lost all virtue, and being under the baneful influence of passion have become the cause of the destruction of good many lives."

As he was musing thus, he thought of the auspicious omens which he had witnessed since, and thus said within, "Or it may be that the lady of graceful limbs has been preserved by her own virtuous energy, for fire does not burn fire, and fire will not touch the spouse of that virtuous one of immeasurable energy and strength, who is further protected by her own pious acts. The bearer of sacrificial offerings has not burnt me simply owing to Rama's prowess and virtue of Janaki. But why should he, who is a worshipful deity unto Bharata and other princes, and who is the consort of Rama after his own mind, be destroyed at all? Indestructible fire can reduce everything into ashes, but it has not burnt my tail, then why should Sita be consumed?"

Then, Hanuman with wonder and awe thought of

seeing the Mainaka in the midst of the sea, and he mused that Sita by her devotion, truthfulness and righteousness could even burn fire, but fire could not burn her.

Hanuman was thus thinking about Janaki's virtue ; in the meantime he heard the birds thus to converse : "What an awful thing has been committed by the conflagration of the houses of the Rakshasas ! The old, and the young and women are crying. They have created arrow in panic and are anxious and restless.

"It seems the splendour of Lanka has forsaken the city. But what a wonder ! The city has been burnt, but Janaki has escaped quite unscathed."

Hearing these words, sweet as nectar, Hanuman was mightily pleased ; and from the auspicious omens he saw and what he had heard from the saints, Hanuman concluded that undoubtedly Janaki was alive. Thus thinking he again proceeded towards the Sinsapa tree.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SIGHT OF JANAKI

Thereafter, Hanuman on arriving at the Sinsapa tree found Janaki seated under the tree. Then greeting her respectfully, he said, "O worshipful lady ! It is due to my good luck that I find you quite safe."

Then Janaki repeatedly looked at him and finding him about to go away, affectionately said, "My child ! If you wish you may stop here just for a day. After taking rest in some secret place you may start on the next day. Even your sight beguiles me of my sorrow for the time being. You are going now, surely to come back, but in the meantime my life may come to an

end. My mind is exceedingly sad, and I am suffering untold misery, and your absence will grieve me more. O hero! I have grave doubts about one thing. The heroic Sugriva has no doubt vast Vanara and Bhalluka hosts to help, but how will he cross the sea with his army along with Rama and Lakshmana? Excepting you, Garuda and the Wind I do not find any body capable of doing this. You are skilled, in everything, but how will this difficult task be accomplished? All praise to your valour, you can yourself easily accomplish the deed, but it will be worthy of his heroism, if Rama himself comes and rescues me. What shall I say more, *my child, encourage him about it.*"

Then Hanuman hearing this reasonable speech of Janaki said, "O worshipful lady! That lord and foremost of Vanaras, Sugriva, gifted with strength is determined on thy behalf. And that master of Vanaras, Sugriva, O Vaidehi, surrounded by thousands and millions of Vanaras, shall speedily come here (for the purpose) and those best of men, those heroes, Rama and Lakshmana coming together, shall afflict Lanka with their arrows. And slaughtering the Rakshasas by his own valour, Raghu's son, O exceedingly fair one, will take you back to his palace O gentle damsel, do thou console thyself, expecting that hour. Soon shalt thou see Ravana slain in battle by Rama. On the lord of Rakshasas being slain along with his sons, councillors, and friends, thou shalt meet Rama as Rohini meeteth with the moon. Soon shall Kakutstha come accompanied by the foremost of Vanaras—who conquering Ravana in conflict, shall remove thy grief." Having thus con-

soled Videha's-daughter Hanuman, son of the Wind-God, setting his-heart upon departure, saluted Vaidehi. And having soothed Vaidehi and having rendered the city disconsolate, displaying his surpassing strength and having baffled Ravana exhibiting his terrific might and saluting Vaidehi, Hanuman became bent upon returning crossing the sea. Then that repressor of foes, the powerful Vanara, eager to see his master ascended Aristha, the foremost of mountains (as if covered with a sheet), consisting of blue woods of tall Padmakas and clouds lying in the interspace between the peaks, discovered by the gay light of the sun; abounding with minerals scattered about, serving for its eyes, seemed which to be reciting aloud in consequence of the solemn sound of waters, to be carolling through its many fountains, and to stay with uplifted arms by means of the Devadarus appearing to be weeping distractedly on account of cascades sounding all around; and seemed also to be treming in consequence of verdant autumnal woods waving, and to be piping on account of the Kichakas vocal through the breeze, noisy with poisonous serpents; appearing to be buried in contemplation on account of caverns covered with snow and looking solemn in consequence; seeming to yawn in the sky with peaks towering heaven-wards, graced with marble caves; surrounded with Sals, Palms, Tamalas, Kanas and bamboos; adorned with spreading and flowing underwoods; abounding with various beasts, and dissected with mineral streams, containing numerous hills, thronged with crags, frequented by Maharshis, and Yakshas and Gandharvas and Kinnaras, and Serpents, impassable

in consequence of plants and trees with caves harbouring lions ; filled with tigers and other ferocious beasts ; and furnished with trees having tasteful fruits and roots ascending that mountain. And on the lovely level of that mountain, the crags crushed with sounds under the tread of that one burning to behold Rama and wrought up with excess of joy, were scattered all around. Ascending that lofty hill, Hanuman greatly dilated his body to cross from the Southern to Norhern shore of the sea.

CHAPTER XXXIX

HANUMAN LEAVES LANKA

After getting to the top of the mountain, the son of the Wind-God cast his look upon the dreadful main inhabited by terrible snakes. Then the hill being sore pressed by the foremost of the Vanaras began to groan in pain and with various creatures on it began to sink beneath the earth. Its peaks were tottering and trees began to topple down. Borne down by his violence the flowery trees fell on the ground as if destroyed by Indra's thunder-bolt, and dreadful yells of lions pierced the sky. The Nymphs with their apparel slipping from them and jewellery in disorder at once rose from the hill into the sky; dreadful snakes of virulent poison with flaming tongues and expanded hoods began to roll in the dust. The Gandharvas, the Yakshas and the Vidyadharas left the hill in pain, took shelter in the sky. And the hill ten yojanas long and thirty in height became one with the ground. And Hanuman being desirous of crossing the billowy ocean in great speed rose to the sky.

The firmament looked like the deep sea, where the Gandharvas and the Rakshasas were like blooming lotuses, the moon-like lily, Lishya and Travana like the swans, the clouds like its ocean, the star Punarvasu like the fish, Bhauma like the crocodile, Airavata like its island, the breeze like its billows and stars its Karandavas, and the moonlight like gentle transparent water. Hanuman easily crossed that sea-like welkin by his speed ; he seemed to swallow the planets and break the moon into pieces. He drew to him clouds of different hues by his velocity and at times he became concealed behind the clouds and at times came out of them. He resounded all quarters by his deep roars and reached the middle of the sea on his way. He simply touched the Mainaka hill and thence shot like an arrow discharged from the bow. From a distance he beheld the mountain on the beach. In great delight he set up a roar and made his way quickly to the shore. He became delighted at the prospect of meeting his friends and brandished his tail in joy. His roars seemed to rend the sky with its dew and the moon.

At that time the Vanaras were anxiously waiting for Hanuman on the northern shore and from a distance they heard his roars like the rumbling of clouds and felt the speed of his course. As soon as they heard that noise they all became anxious for his sight. In the meantime, Jamvuvan addressing the Vanaras cheerfully said, "Surely Hanuman has been crowned with success or such a noise would not have been heard."

Then the Vanaras jumped in joy, and many of them in order to behold Hanuman moved from one peak to

another peak, from one branch of the tree to another branch. Some of them ascended on the tree tops and began to wave[1] pieces of white cloth in delight.

Here, Hanuman was advancing like the roaring wind. The Vanaràs joined their palms at his sight. And Hanuman with a great noise fell upon the peak like a mountain clipped of its wings.

The Vanaras were extremely glad at his sight and they surrounded him immediately. Every one's face was bright with joy. Many of them roared in delight. They began to chatter greatly. Some of them broke down branches of the trees to prepare his seat.

Then, Hanuman bowed down to Jamvuvan and other superiors and to prince Angada. They welcomed him and gazed upon him with cheerful heart. Then Hanuman briefly narrated information about Janaki, and then taking Angada's hand he sat down in a beautiful spot in the wood and valley of the Mahendra hill and being questioned he gave a brief account of his deeds· "O Vanaras! I have seen the worshipful Janaki, in the Asoka forest. She is surrounded by dreadful Rakshasis. She is extremely weak and lean on account of fasting. She wears a single braid of hair, and has become highly anxious for the sight of Rama."

The Vanaras hearing these nectar-like sweet words became exceedingly glad, Some chattered, and some roared in delight. Some brandished their tails, some

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1 It is like the modern European custom of waving handkerchiefs to friends—specially when a train leaves or enters the platform.—T.

shook their long tails, and most of them jumped from the hill and touched Hanuman in joy.

Then Angada said, "O hero! I do not find anybody equal to you in valour or bravery, since you have succeeded in coming back after crossing the vast sea. To speak the truth, you are the saviour of our lives. Now, being successful, with your help we shall appear before Rama. Wonderful is thy devotion to your master and wonderful is thy patience: owing to good luck you have gathered whereabouts of Janaki, and due to good luck Rama will be absolved from the pangs of Sita's separation."

Then the Vanaras in delightful heart surrounded prince Angada, Hanuman, and Jamvuvan and sat on a spacious tableland, in order to hear everything in detail with joined palms.

CHAPTER XL

RECITAL OF THE EXPLOITS

Then Jamvuvan in delightful mind asked, "O hero! How could you find the worshipful Janaki in the Asoka forest? How, does she fare there and how does the cruel Ravana behave with her? How could you get the clue of Janaki? What did she say? Tell us everything in detail. After hearing that we shall decide our course of action. And now tell us too what we shall conceal from Rama and what we shall report to him"

Thereupon Hanuman bowing down to Janaki in his mind cheerfully began:

'You see, in order to cross the sea I rose into the sky, in your presence, from the Mahendra hill. There were

great obstacles on my way. At one place, I found a golden mountain obstructing my way. I considered it to be formidable; afterwards nearing it I thought of forcing my way through it. Thinking this I struck it with my tail and it at once crumbled into pieces. Then that mountain assuming the form of a human being said, 'My boy! I am a friend of the Wind-God, so your uncle. I live in this ocean; my name is Mainaka. Formerly, the mountains had wings and they could travel wherever they wished. Afterwards Indra clipped their wings. My boy! At that time, my wings were saved through your father's help. He threw me down into the sea. Now, it is my duty to help Rama. Rama is virtuous and a great hero." Then with the permission of the hill I proceeded to my destination and the Mainaka disappeared. Then Surasa, the Mother of the Nagas, rose from the sea and appeared before me.

She said, "Oh, Kapi chief, the gods have ordained you as my food, so I shall devour you."

At this, I grew pale with fear and entreated her with folded palms saying that I had been engaged by Rama as an envoy to search for Sita.[1]

But Surasa at first did not yield, she expanded her mouth and I contracted my body, and emerged out of her jaws by assuming the size of a thumb. Thereupon the denizens of the sky eulogised me, and I left the place at the speed of an eagle. Again I was thwarted in my career, but I could not see anything whatsoever. On my eyes downward, I noted a dreadful Rakshasi

1 Repetition of the former details already mentioned has been omitted.—T.

rising out of the waves. She wanted to devour me and I at once agreed to her proposal: I expanded my body, and she opened her mouth. Instantly I contracted my body, entered into her mouth and came out by tearing her breast, and the formidable Rakshasi gave up her ghost stretching her arms on the sea. Then finding my way interrupted by various obstacles I doubled my speed and within a short time got view of the rocky southern beach. There stood Lanka. I entered the city at night in disguise. On my way, I was accosted by a formidable dark woman with flaming hair. She wanted to kill me, but I overcame her with one blow of fist. Thereupon she said that she was the guardian deity of the Rakshasas, and since I could subdue her by my strength the destruction of the Rakshasas was imminent, she prophesied.

Then, through the night I ranged through the palace of Ravana, but couldn't find Janaki. I was stricken with grief. At that time I noticed a wooded garden surrounded by a golden wall. There was a huge Sinsapa tree in its midst. On ascending the tree I saw plantain groves of golden hue. At a short distance from it was seated Janaki. She had only a piece of cloth on her body, her heir was stained with dust and gathered into a single braid. She was lean with fasting and looked like a lotus withered in snow.[1] She was surrounded on all sides by grim Rakshasis, just like a fawn surrounded by a pack of blood-thirsty wolves. She hates Ravana and has resolved to give up her

1 I have changed winter into snow, and tigers into wolves.

life. In the meantime I heard jingling sounds of ornaments and anklets mixed up with the noise of several voices. I at once contracted my body and hid myself behind the leaves of the tree

Then, the Rakshasa king, Ravana arrived there with his wives. At his sight, Janaki drew her thighs close together and covered her breasts with her hands. She trembled with fear and cast frightened looks hither and thither. Ravana then approached her and said, "O Janaki ! I greet thee by bowing down my head. Please have regard for me, but if you slight me through your pride, surely I shall drink your blood two months after."

Thereupon, Janaki angrily replied, "O Villain ! I am the spouse of heroic Rama and daughter-in-law of king Dasaratha. I wonder why your tongue did not crumble into pieces for uttering those words ? O sinful wretch ! Shame to your prowess, since you took me in the absence of Rama. In no respect thou art equal to Rama. You are not even worthy of being his valet. Rama is invincible and truthful."

Ravana, at these harsh words of Janaki, burned with rage like a funeral pyre, and by revolving his cruel eyes, began to beat her with his right fist. His companions shrieked at this. Then Dhanyamalini came near and preventing him said, "What will you do with that Janaki ? Come, enjoy yourself with me. Janaki is in no way suprior to me either in beauty or in accomplishments Be content with the daughters of the Gods and Yakshas. What will you do with Janaki ?"

Then that woman led Ravana away. After that a number of Rakshasis began to abuse her in harsh words.

Janaki slighted their words like a piece of straw. Thus they were disappointed and soon after they fell asleep from exhaustion. In the meantime, a Rakshasi name Trijata suddenly roused from sleep, addressing the Rakshasis, said, "Don't devour the chaste Janaki, be content with your own blood. I had an awful dream this night. Ravana will be soon destroyed with all the Rakshasas. Only Sita can save us then, so let us throw ourselves at her feet. She is cast down with sorrow, but surely she will feel happy if she had such a dream like this. If she be pleased with our greetings, she can certainly save us from imminent disaster."

Thus being pleased with the dream about the victory of her husband, she bashfully replied, "If, Trijata's dream be not false, I shall surely protect you then."

I grew sad and anxious seeing such a miserable plight of Janaki with my own eyes, and thought of the means of carrying out conversation with her. Then, I hit upon a device and began to sing the praise of the royal line of Ikshwaku. As soon as Janaki heard my words she asked me with tearful eyes, "O Vanara ! Who art thou ? Why have you come here ? And how could you contract friendship with Rama ?"

Thereupon, I replied, "O worshipful lady ! Sugriva, the king of the Kapis, is a friend of Rama. I am his servant named Hanuman. Rama has sent me to find out your whereabouts. He has himself given this ring as his token Now tell me what I can do for you ? Rama and Lakshmana are waiting for you on the southern shore of the sea. If you wish, I may take you there."

Then Janaki said, "It is my desire that the heroic

Rama should himself rescue me by destroying Ravana with his clan."

Then I asked for some happy remembrancer as her token to Rama. At this, she made over to me a jewel taking it off from the ornament of her head. Then, I went round in order to start. At the time of departure, she again said, "O envoy! Tell Rama everything about me, and do what might induce Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva to come here soon. My lease of life is for two months more, and if Rama does not turn up within this period, I shall surely put an end to my life like a helpless woman."

O Vanaras! At these piteous words of Janaki I was overwhelmed with anger and resolved to reduce Lanka into ruins. Then I dilated my body and being desirous of a fight I began to break down the Asoka forest. The hideous Rakshasis rose from sleep, beheld me and reported the thing to Ravana. Thereupon, Ravana sent the Kinkaras to fight against me, I destoryed them with the bolt of a door. Then I destroyed a sacred edifice. Then Ravana sent Jamvumali, son of Prahastha. I slew him in fight. Ravana then despatched the sons of his counsellors with the foot-soldiers. I immediately destroyed them all. Ravana then sent prince Akshya and when he got into the sky to display his valour, I caught hold of his legs and dashed him against the ground and he breathed his last. Akshya was the son of Mandodari, and highly skilled in battle. Then Ravana sent his another son named Indrajit, who bound me by the help of a Brahma Astra and took me before Ravana by tying me with a rope. There, I had

talk with Ravana. He asked me why I had gone there. I said it was for Janaki. I gave out my name and the nature of my mission. I said, that friendship had been contracted between Sugriva and Rama, that Rama had made him king after destroying Vali, and he had sent me as an envoy. I asked him to return Janaki without delay, or his army would be destroyed by the Vanara force. None as yet knows the prowess of the Vanaras who are even sought for by the gods.

Thereupon that wicked Ravana angrily looked at me and ordered my death. Thereupon Ravana's brother Vibhishana, interceded on my behalf and pleaded for my life, saying that the killing of an envoy was not sanctioned by the Shastras. Ravana then ordered to set fire to my tail. The Rakshasas then covered my tail with jute[1] and cotton and after setting fire to it began to assault me with their fists hard as logs of dry wood. Fire was burning in my tail. My hands and feet were bound, and the night-prowlers proclaimed my offence in public streets. Thus I was gradually taken near the city gate. At once I contracted my body and freed myself from the bondage.

Then assuming my own form I took up the iron bolt and destroyed the Rakshasas. In the mean time, I burnt down Lanka. After that, I thought since I have reduced the city into ashes, perhaps Janaki too has been destroyed.

O Vanaras! I was overwhelmed with grief at this thought. But in the mean time, I heard the Charanas

1 Please mark that Jute was cultivated in India even in such distant past.

say that though Lanka had been burnt, Janaki was unhurt. I was greatly delighted at this news and from some auspicious signs my belief was confirmed. I thought that though fire was burning in my tail, I was not burnt, and the wind was blowing with the fragrance of flowers, and thinking of the prowess of Rama, Lakshmana and Janaki, I felt greatly encouraged.

Then I again went to Janaki and after greeting her I got upon the Arati hill for crossing the sea. I was envious to meet you since I did not see you for a long time. All these I have done for Sugriva's sake. You please accomplish what has been left unaccomplished by me.

CHAPTER XLI

JAMVUVAN'S ADVICE

After narrating everything in details Hanuman again said to the Vanaras :

O Vanaras ! From Janaki's conduct it appeared to me that by Rama's endeavours and with Sugriva's help everything would be crowned with success.' Janaki's character is like that of the worshipful Arundhati. By her religious and yogic powers, she can protect the world and can also reduce it to ashes.

'Ravana too has great virtue, otherwise he would have been destroyed for touching Janaki's body. What Janaki can do, when angry, by the slight motion of her finger—even fire can not do that. O Vanaras ! You are intelligent, heroic, skilled in arms and desirous of victory. It is quite different with you. Even I can alone destroy Lanka with all the Rakshasas. Though

the Brahma, Raudra, Vayavya and Varuna weapons of Indrajit are quite formidable, yet I can render them futile by my prowess. I did not display my fullest prowess because I had no commission from you for that. The ocean may overflow its shores, the Mandara hill might move from its place, but the enemy's host can never conquer Jamvuvan in battle, and the heroic son of Vali is alone capable of destroying the Rakshasas. The mount Mandara is oppressed by the speed of the Rakshasas. What hero is there amongst the gods and the Asuras that can overcome Mainda or Dwivida in battle? I do not see any one who can oppose the mighty sons of Aswi? Lanka has been burnt, devastated by me alone. I openly declared in the public streets of Lanka, 'May victory crown mighty Rama and Lakshmana and may Sugriva be prosperous being protected by Raghava And I am the son of the Wind-God and servant of the king of Koshala.' I have announced this everywhere.

I saw vicious Ravana standing at the foot of a Sinsapa tree in the Asoka forest, and the chaste Sita sitting meekly. She was worn out with grief and anxiety, like the moon shorn of her brilliance being enveloped with clouds. She was surrounded by the Rakshasis but being devoted to her husband, she did not care for Ravana, proud of his prowess. Like Paulami to Purandara, all her thoughts are centred on her husband. I saw her wearing a single piece of cloth soiled with dirt; and she wore a single braid of hair. She lay on the ground absorbed in the thoughts of her husband and she looked poor like a lotus at the advent of winter. She has

not the least attachment for Ravana and is resolved to put an end to her life. After creating her confidence, I addressed the gazelle-eyed damsel and related to her the whole story of my mission. She was greatly delighted hearing of the friendship between Rama and Sugriva. She is well-behaved and devoted to her lord and blessed is Ravana that she has not destroyed him yet. Rama will be merely instrumental in bringing about Ravana's destruction. Like the moon on the first day of the lunar fortnight, owing to the separation of her lord she has become exceedingly emaciated in body. Thus lives Sita lean with grief. Do now perform what you think right.'

Hearing all this, Vail's son, Angada, said, "These two sons of Aswi, endowed with great swiftness are exceedingly powerful and they are proud of the boon conferred on them by the Grand-Sire of the creation. Formerly, to honour Aswi, the Grand-Sire of the creation rendered these two incapable of being slain by any. Then once defeating the hosts of the gods, these two heroes, exalted with victory, drank nectar, and these two, if enraged, can destroy Lanka with all its horses, elephants and chariots What to speak of others, I can destroy the city with all the Rakshasas and mighty Ravana, and there will be nothing to wonder at if I am assisted by mighty heroes like you, well-armed and capable of winning victory. I have heard that Hanuman saw Janaki : why hasn't he brought her here ? You are great heroes; how will you break this unpleasant news to Rama ?

"In heroism, there is none like you even amongst the gods. Let us now kill Ravana, conquer Lanka and bring back Janaki with delight. Hanuman has destroyed

almost all the Rakshasas, then what also remains excepting the rescue of Janaki ? There is no necessity of inflicting hardships upon those Vanaras that have come to Kishkindhya from different quarters. Come, let us first destroy the remaining Rakshasas and then meet Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva."

Thereupon, Jamvuvan cheerfully observed, "Prince ! What you have said does not appear to be commendable. You see, Sugriva and the noble Rama have asked us to ascertain the whereabouts of Janaki. They have not given us any direction for her rescue."

"Even, if we can somehow conquer the Rakshasas, that might not be quite agreeable to them. The king of kings, Rama, speaking of his heroic line, has sworn before all about Janaki's rescue ; so we must not stand in his way. What you wish to do will spoil everything, and Rama too will not be pleased with it. Let us now go to Rama and Lakshmana and tell them everything."

CHAPTER XLII

RETURN TO KISHKINDHYA

The Vanaras approved of Jamvuvan's proposal and then they descended from the Mahendra mountain and proceeded towards Kishkindhya. They covered the earth and sky in their journey. Everyone looked at Hanuman and everyone was bent upon serving Rama and craving reputation—every one of them was greatly delighted at the news of Janaki. They desired for a fight with the Rakshasas.

Then the Vanaras, following the route through the sky, arrived at Madhuvana, the beautiful garden of

Sugriva. This garden was full of trees and was in beauty like the celestial garden Nandana. Sugriva's maternal uncle, Dadhimukha, the Kapi leader, guarded that garden all along. It was quite inaccessible, but the Vanaras getting there became quite irresistible, and they prayed to Angada for drinking honey. Thereupon, Angada with the consent of Jamvuvan and other elder Vanaras, immediately gave them permission. The Vanaras got upon trees covered with bees, and with great delight began to eat sweet-scented flowers and fruits.

Then, the Vanaras grew wild by the excessive draught of honey.[1] Some began to dance, some to sing, some to laugh, some to roar and some to nod. Some began to walk, some to jump, some of them grew delirious and some began to quarrel with others. Some fell upon the trees and some on the ground in great violence. Some Vanara was indulging in music, while another approached him with an arch smile; some one was weeping incessantly when another approached him shedding tears. Some one was striking another with nails, while the latter was striking the former in return. Thus the Vanara troops grew wild.

Then Dadhimukha, the keeper of the garden, finding the Vanaras thus destroying the fruits, flowers and leaves of the garden angrily asked them to desist, but

1 Madhu means also wine as in the Chandi "Garja Garja Kshanam Mudha Yavat Madhu Pivamyaham" There the Goddess Chandi (the supreme God conceived as the Eternal mother) says to her foe, "Boast on, thou fool, so long as I drink wine." Here the effect of honey has been described like that of excessive drink.—T.

the Vanaras setting his words at naught began to abuse him. Therefore, Dadhimukha became more anxious for the preservation of the garden, and for the maintenance of order. He rebuked the fearless, slapped the weak ones, disputed with some, and tried to pacify some with gentle words. But the Vanaras were completely under the influence of honey and seeing no other alternative he wished to subdue them by force. At that time, the Vanaras had no fear of royal punishment, and they began to drag Dadhimukha with great violence. Some tore him with nails, some bit him with teeth. Some slapped him and some kicked at him. Thus the Vanaras rendered Dadhimukha half-dead.

Then Hanuman encouraging the Vanaras said, "I shall check your adversary : drink in peace."

At this Angada delightfully said, "This hero has come back successful. There is nothing to be said upon what he has said. Even if it be any misdeed, we shall do it. O Vanaras ! Get yourself composed and drink."

Thereupon, the Vanaras repeatedly praised Angada and entered the garden with the impetuosity on entering into a forest. They grew absolutely fearless on account of Hanuman's success and for drinking honey. They, after forcibly binding down the warders of the garden, began to drink honey and eat sweet fruits of the garden. Thereupon, a number of guards arrived there, but the Vanaras began to assault them. Some one took up in his hand honey measuring a *drona*,[1] some began to drink in joy, some threw off the remainder of

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1 32 Seers or 60 lbs. make one *Drona*.—T.

his drink, some struck another with the remainder of his drink. Some sat at the bottom of the tree, holding a branch in his hand, some on account of fatigue lay down upon the grassy bed, some fell prostrate on the ground, some began to coo like a bird, some became talkative, some began to laugh, some to weep, some talked in a covert manner while another took it in its pure opposite meaning

In the meantime, the retinue of Dadhimukha began to run away being assaulted by the Vanaras. The Vanaras took each one of them and threw them up. Then Dadhimukha's men anxiously informed him that the Vanaras being encouraged by Hanuman's words were destroying Madhuvana by their violence, and they threw us down taking us by our legs.

Thereupon, Dadhimukha was greatly enraged and said, "The Vanaras have grown exceedingly proud for their prowess ; let us go and quell them by force."

They then again turned towards Madhuvana, and Dadhimukha rushed forth by uprooting a huge tree. He bit his lips in anger and his followers too took up stones and trees. Then Angada in anger seized him with force and threw him down in great violence on the ground. His bones were smashed and he lay listless and bloodstained. Then after somehow being free from their hands, Dadhimukha advised his followers to go to Sugriva, where the Kapi king was with Rama and Lakshmana, and there they would narrate the misdeeds of Angada. Sugriva would then destroy the Vanaras. "This Madhuvana is the ancestral property of Sugriva, said Dadhimukha, "and if he can know that such mischief

has been done to it, then he will destroy these Vanaras greedy for honey."

Saying this Dadhimukha proceeded towards Sugriva, and taking the route through the sky, he shortly appeared before Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva. His face was dark with sorrow, and with folded palms, he fell upon the feet of Sugriva.

Thereupon, Sugriva, in anxiety said, "Get up, Dadhimukha, why do you throw yourself at my feet. I give you assurance. Why have you been struck with fear ? Is not everything well with Madhuvana ?" Then Dadhimukha stood up and said, "O king ! Vali and yourself are the lords of the Vanaras, but you never allowed the Vanaras to enjoy Madhuvana to their will but Angada and other Vanaras have destroyed that garden. With these guards I repeatedly tried to prevent them, but they were engaged in drinking and frowned at us. They have kicked at some, slapped some and threw up some of them. They have insulted us greatly. You are the king of the Vanaras, Ah ! that such things would happen when you are here "

Then Lakshmana enquired, "Why this Kapichief has come, and what is the cause of his grief ?"

Thereupon, Sugriva replied, 'Your worship, Angada and others have drunk honey in Madhuvana and Dadhimukha has come to inform me of that. It seems that those whom I sent towards the south have come back being successful, otherwise they would not have dared to do all these. Since they have arrived at Madhuvana, it seems there has not been any obstacle to their success. The guards of the forest tried to prevent them, but

they angrily beat the warders. They have not even paid heed to Dadhimukha, the chief of the guards. It is clear that Hanuman has found out Janaki. I don't find any other capable of this. Intelligence, courage, valour and knowledge of the Shastras and success are at his command. You see in whatever work Jamvuvan, Hanuman and Angada are leaders, the result can't be otherwise. Now, these heroes after carrying out the orders have entered into Madhuvana. These guards tried to stop their recklessness, but have come back being insulted. Dadhimukha has come to inform me. O hero! When the Vanaras have given themselves up to drinking, surely they have gathered information about Janaki. We have got this garden as a gift from the gods. Had they been unsuccessful, they couldn't have been unruly."

Rama and Lakshmana were greatly delighted at this pleasant news. Sugriva then said to Dadhimukha, "O Maternal uncle! I am exceedingly glad to hear from you that the Vanaras are partaking of fruits and roots of Madhuvana. It is a matter to forbear. Go back to your post and send Hanuman and others soon to me. I am quite eager to know how he had gathered information about Janaki."

Then Dadhimukha bowed to Rama and Lakshmana and went back with the Vanaras delighted. On entering the forest he found the Vanaras, freed from the influence of honey.[1] With folded palms he approached Angada and said, "O prince! The keepers of this forest unknowingly forbade you to drink. Kindly forgive them.

1 They passed honey through urine.—T.

Thou art prince and the lord of this Madhuvana, drink honey to your fill. At first, I interfered through my foolishness. I have reported everything to Sugriva. He has not been at all angry ; he has rather been pleased and has asked me to send you soon to him."

Then Angada said, O Vanaras ! Dadhimukha joyfully reported everything to Sugriva. It seems Rama and Lakshmana have heard everything. We have committed many misdeeds. Let us now go to Sugriva. I am at your command. I shall do what you will ask me to do. Though I am your prince, still I don't venture to command you."

Thereupon the Vanaras cheerfully returned, "O prince, who can, being himself the master, say like this ? Others proud of wealth try to pose as masters but the case is different with you , your words are worthy of your modesty. In fact, this modesty indicates your future prosperity and greatness. Now let us go to Sugriva. We assure you, we cannot proceed even a step without your command."

Then the Vanaras covered the sky and went to Sugriva. They proceeded in great speed like stones hurled by machine (tools) and roared like clouds.

At that sight, Sugriva said to Rama, "O friend ! Surely Hanuman, the son of the Wind-God, has got information of Janaki, oherwise none would have ventured to come here after the expiry of the stipulated time. From Angada's delight I can clearly infer that, had he been unsuccessful he wouldn't have come to me. Other Vanaras, even though unsuccessful might have been restive for their mercurial temper, but certainly

prince Angada would have looked sad. Madhuvana is our ancestral garden: certainly Angada would not have entered there, if he were unsuccessful. Rama, be consoled. Hanuman and nobody else, has found out Janaki. Intelligence, success, strength, energy and knowledge of the Shastras are in his possession. O friend! There is more cause of anxiety from the devastation of Madhuvana. It is clear that the Vanaras have returned successful." The chattering of the Vanaras was then gradually heard. The Vanaras came to see Rama and bowed to him and Sugriva. Then Hanuman came near Rama and with folded palms said, "O hero! I have found out Janaki; she is well and is maintaining her chastity."

Rama and Lakshmana were immensely delighted at this nectar-like news. The heroic Lakshmana with great respect looked at Sugriva, and Rama in joy repeatedly looked at Hanuman with affectionate regards.

CHAPTER XLIII

HANUMAN'S MESSAGE

They all repaired to the Prasravana hill. There the Vanaras began to narrate everything about Janaki in full, her confinement in the harem of Ravana, abuses by the Rakshasis, her devotion towards her husband and the time allotted to her by Ravana, etc.

Rama being delighted with Janaki's news, asked to tell him where Janaki was and what her feelings were towards him.

Thereupon, the Vanaras requested Hanuman to narrate everything about Janaki. Then Hanuman bowing down to Janaki in his mind, placed in Rama's

hand the shining jewel as the souvenir of Janaki and with folded palms began, "O Lord ! I crossed a hundred *yojanas* of the sea for Janaki. On its southern shore stand Lanka, the city of the wicked Ravana. I have found there Janaki ; she is imprisoned within the seraglio of Ravana. The Rakshasis are ever abusing her. She is kept under guard. She is suffering intensely from the pangs of your separation. She wears a single braid of hair on her back. She is sad and ever absorbed in your thoughts. The earth is her bed. She looks pale like an antelope at the advent of a hunter. She has resolved to give up her life on account of her hatred for Ravana. I created her confidence, reciting the glories of the Ikshwaku race. Then being engaged in conversation with her, I spoke about my mission. She has been glad learning of your friendship with Sugriva. She is ever devoted to you, and she does everything for you. I have seen that Janaki is devoted to pennace.

"O Rama ! She has narrated everything about how she was tyrannised by a crow on the Chitrakuta hill. She has also requested me to tell you everything of what I have witnessed with my own eyes in Lanka. I have brought this jewel of her head with great care. She has asked me to offer it in the presence of Sugriva. She has repeatedly asked to remember the mark you used to put on her face with red arsenic. She has further said that she would keep her life for two months more. Thus has said the worshipful Janaki. Now, devise means for crossing the sea.

Then placing Janaki's jewel on his heart Rama began to weep and looking repeatedly with tearful eyes at that

jewel addressing Sugriva, the Kapichief, he said, "My friend! My heart melts at the sight of this jewel, as milk trickles down from the udders of a cow at the sight of her calf. This gem was presented to Sita by Janaka, the king of Videha at the time of her wedding. This jewel was obtained from the ocean and was presented to him by Sakra being pleased with sacrifice. The sight of this jewel repeatedly reminds me of the royal saint, Janaka. Darling Janaki used to wear it on her head and it seems I have got her back actually. O gentle one, tell me again what Janaki has said. As sprinkling of water restores senses to the unconscious, so her words have revived me with life. O Lakshmana! I see this jewel without Janaki! What can be sadder than this? If anyhow she can pass two months, she will live long. O hero! I cannot bear the pangs of separation even for a moment. Now take me to that region where you met Janaki. Having got information of her I cannot wait for a moment. Janaki is very timid by nature, and I know not how she passes her days amongst the dreadful Rakshasas. As the bright autumnal moon becomes dark with clouds, so her face has now become devoid of lustre. As medicine is to the sick, so her words will be sufficient for keeping this life. Tell me what that sweet-tongued damsel has said. Tell me how she has managed to live, suffering misery after misery."

Then Hanuman said, "O Rama! Janaki has mentioned the incident of the crow on the Chitrakuta hill as a remembrancer. Once she was asleep; in the meantime ... suddenly appeared and tore her breast. At that ... on Janaki's lap, so the crow, fear-

n again tore her breast. Your body became drenched with blood and she in agony roused you from sleep. Seeing her distress with your own eyes, you panted like a serpent and asked, "Tell me who has torn your breast with nails? Who wanted to dally with an angry penta-hooded sanke?" Saying this, you cast your eyes round and saw a crow with bloody claws before Janaki. That was Indra's son, in speed like the wind. He lived in a terrestrial cave. As soon as you saw the crow, your eyes rolled in anger and being resolved to kill it, you took up a weed from your grassy seat and aimed at it. It flamed like the doomsday fire and you then discharged it towards the crow. The burning Kusa-weed followed the bird. It ranged through the three worlds, but did not get any refuge anywhere. Thereupon, it again came back to you and begged for shelter. Seeing him lying low on the ground, you took pity on him and saved him though he was worthy of being slain. But your Brahma weapon was irresistible and it could never fail, for this you only injured his right eye. Then the crow repaired to his own place bowing down to Dasaratha and to you.

"O hero! Janaki has further said, 'I know not why you are forgiving the Rakshasas. There is none who can match you amongst the Devas, Danavas and the Gandharvas? Now if you have the slightest regard for me, then soon slay the wicked Ravana with sharp arrows. Why is not heroic Lakshmana rescuing me at the direction of his brother? The valour of these two princes is incapable of being repressed even by the gods. Then why are they neglecting me? When they

are indifferent about a thing which is quite within their powers, it seems I am somehow at fault.' O Rama ! Hearing these piteous words of Janaki, I said, 'O worshipful lady ! I can verily swear unto you that Rama is on your account indifferent about everything, and the heroic Lakshmana seeing this change in him is passing his days in great sorrow. With great trouble I have gathered your whereabouts. Don't despair now. To tell you the truth, your sorrows will soon be over. Rama and Lakshmana in their eagerness to see you, will reduce Lanka to ashes. The heroic Rama after destroying the villainous Ravana with his family will take you back to Ayodhya. O worshipful lady ! Give me some present that can be recognised.'

"Then Janaki once looked round and conferred this excellent ornament of head from her cloth. I took that jewel in folded palms for you, and was ready to start. At this, Janaki became extremely agitated and with tearful eyes broke forth again, 'O Messenger ! You are exceedingly fortunate, since you can see the lotus-eyed Rama and Lakshmana.' Then I replied, 'O worshipful lady ! Soon get upon my back , I shall take you to Rama and Lakshmana even this day.' Thereupon, Janaki said, 'O messenger, I shall not, of my own accord, touch your back. It will be against righteousness. Formerly I had to touch the body of the Rakshasa but that was due to circumstances. How could I help it ? Soon return to those two princes. Enquire after their welfare and that of friend Sugriva. Tell the heroic Rama to rescue me soon from these miseries. What shall I add further ? I wish you God-speed.'

"O worshipful lord! Janaki, out of her love for you and on account of her friendliness towards me, said again, "O Messenger! May heroic Rama soon rescue me by destroying the wicked Ravana. You see, at your sight the sorrows of this unfortunate soul has abated for the time being. Now if you wish, you may remain in hiding in some secret place in Lanka, then after removing your fatigue start tomorrow. I shall eagerly wait for your return with wistful eyes, but it is doubtful whether I shall live so long. I have already been suffering from one misery after another. After this your absence will overwhelm me more. O hero! I know not how the Vanaras, Bhallukas, the Kapichief Sugriva and those two princes will ever cross the impassable ocean? Except you, Garuda and the wind I do not find any body else capable of crossing the ocean. You are intelligent; now tell me what means you devise for that. I admit that you alone can achieve all these, but it will be worthy of him if he comes with his army and destroys the enemy. It will be only proper for him if he invades the city of Lanka with Vanara troops and rescue me thereby. Now act in such a manner that the great hero may be eager to show his valour." Then I replied, 'O worshipful lady! Sugriva, the lord of the Kapis, has determined to rescue you, and he will soon arrive with the Vanara hosts to destroy the Rakshasas. The Vanaras are his obedient servants. They are mighty and irresistible. They are quick like the flight of thought and never any fatigue is observed in them in accomplishing arduous deeds. O lady, there are Vanaras superior to me and my equals under the Kapi King, but there is

none inferior to me. Not to speak of those great heroes, even myself, humble and weak as I am, have arrived here. The best are never sent on any mission, the inferior ones are employed in such work. So don't be dejected with sorrow. The Kapi heroes will cross the ocean in one bound, and Rama and Lakshmana will arrive on my back like the sun and the moon. You will soon witness that lion-like hero with brother Lakshmana at the gate of Lanka. You will soon see the Vanaras formidable as lions and tigers, and soon hear their heroic roars on the top of that hill. O worshipful lady! You will soon witness Rama will return with you to Ayodhya and will be invested with the crown.' O Rama! Janaki, though heavily cast down with sorrow for your absence has been greatly comforted by and consoled by these assurances of mine."

THE END OF THE SUNDARA KANDAM